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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **From Workplace Violence Victims to Activists**

*Three career nurses form grass-roots organization  
to stop assaults on healthcare workers*

*Hear their story live on The Connect Show, Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00PM*

Quincy, MA (April 21, 2010) **Stop Healthcare Violence** was founded by three nursing professionals who have worked in both inpatient and outpatient hospital settings for many years. All three have been assaulted in the workplace. All three have witnessed co-workers suffer physical and verbal attacks. All three know it is time to stop the violence against healthcare workers. It is with this sentiment, that these career nurses have taken it upon themselves to address head on the issue of violence perpetrated against healthcare workers.

"Imagine going to work like it is any other day," says ER nurse and Stop Healthcare Violence co-founder and advocate Sheila Wilson, RN, MPH. "You never think or suspect you will be unsafe in any way, let alone assaulted."

Wilson and her coworkers have discovered they are not so lucky. "In the workplace we have been slapped, violently jumped on from behind, spit on and insulted with the most contemptible words

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imaginable. We have seen colleagues knocked unconscious and severely injured.” Wilson asks, “Is this part of our job as healthcare workers? Can we go anywhere else and spit on or hit someone and get away with it? Is this acceptable treatment of a caregiver who is also a wife, mother, daughter, sister, husband, father, son, brother or friend?” Wilson and her organization’s colleagues fervently reply with a resounding, “No.”

According to the FBI, workplace violence has gained recognition as a distinct category of violent crime that requires specific responses from employers, law enforcement and the community.

In response to this epidemic, Sheila Wilson, along with colleagues Sheryl Williams, RN, BSN, and Elizabeth McTomney, RN, founded Stop Healthcare Violence to become change agents against workplace violence. Affectionately nicknamed “The Nurses,” the three work tirelessly to educate employees and employers on the reality of this rampant pandemic, sending the clear message that being unsafe in the workplace is not and should never be acceptable. They spend countless hours educating healthcare professionals, administrators and Congress that ensuring job safety and security should be paramount.

“Most of us in the emergency room have been assaulted, but I don’t believe it’s part of our job. In fact, it upsets me that some of our patients, their families and friends behave as though it’s okay to attack a healthcare worker,” says Wilson, adding that this too-prevalent lackadaisical attitude needs to change, just as the aggressive behavior needs to stop.

Wilson, Williams and McTomney lobby fiercely for legislation that would protect healthcare workers from assault by making it a felony. Their goal as agents of change is to educate and empower healthcare professionals with ways to identify, respond to and prevent violence, and

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promote an improved response to any type of abuse. By providing healthcare workers and administrators with the proper tools it will enable them to maintain the safety of all healthcare providers while ensuring the integrity of the medical environment - for employees as well as patients.

Wilson stresses, "Raising awareness and bringing about drastic modification in our beliefs, practices, policies and legislation is so critical. When nothing is done about it – when there is no reporting, no follow up, no charges filed and no investigation - there will be no change and the danger will only continue to exacerbate." Nor, stresses Wilson, will the perpetrator receive the help she or he needs.

Their efforts as change agents are starting to garner results. Wilson says, "Hospital officials are slowly but surely beginning to address workplace violence. At our medical facility we are on our way to instituting a solid policy of abuse incident reporting. This way, administrative personnel can see what is really happening. If a staff member is injured we complete injury reports. We are also filing police reports and have begun attending court hearings. We are seeing a difference. But we have a long way to go."

To learn more on the topic of healthcare workplace violence tune into The Connect Show on Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00PM EST and listen to the founders of Stop Healthcare Workplace Violence as they discuss how they are influencing and crafting policies designed to protect the healthcare workforce and reduce the widespread violence found in today's healthcare environment. You will clearly hear that they are no longer victims.

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**About STOP HEALTHCARE VIOLENCE, Stop Healthcare Violence** was informally founded in 2008 and formally forged in 2009 by three healthcare professionals, Sheila Wilson, RN, MPH, Sheryl Williams, RN, BSN and Elizabeth McTomney RN. The organization's mission is to create and maintain the safety of all healthcare providers and their families, while ensuring the integrity of the work environment. Stop Healthcare Violence assists administrators and organizations in identifying key factors that contribute to, or perpetuate, workplace violence, and also provide follow up education: reporting processes, filing criminal charges and supporting beneficial legislation. They offer speaking engagements, presentations and consultations to engage and empower healthcare providers to become change agents in their own organization. Are you or someone you know a victim of workplace violence? Do you want to know more about the issue? Do you need help reporting? Are you seeking guidance or assistance with this issue? For more information please visit [www.stophealthcareviolence.org](http://www.stophealthcareviolence.org) or contact us at [info@stophealthcareviolence.org](mailto:info@stophealthcareviolence.org).

**About THE CONNECT SHOW, The Connect Show's** premise is to share inspiring, educational, enlightening and useful resources and information. Host Jeanne White strives to use her voice and platform as a means to enhance professional and personal lifestyles. She highlights both traditional and non-traditional topics and guests, and always aims to serve as a vehicle that provides valuable connections. As Ms. White often said, "It's all about connections!" With The Connect Show, her goals are to "give back" by connecting the audience as well as her guests with other individuals, groups, organizations, causes, opportunities and experiences, to inspire, inform and enlighten, and bring about positive transformation and change. The Connect Show can be found on [Internet Voices Radio](http://InternetVoicesRadio.com) every Friday at 4:00PM EST. For more information please visit [www.connectwithjeannewhite.com](http://www.connectwithjeannewhite.com). Inquiries can be made by calling 781-326-4902 or emailing [jwhite@connectwithjeannewhite.com](mailto:jwhite@connectwithjeannewhite.com).