

Southern California nurse stabbed outside emergency room

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On Monday, September 19 at around 6:50 p.m., a nurse was stabbed outside the emergency room lobby of Mission Community Hospital in Panorama City, California. The 49-year-old nurse was approaching the hospital to start his overnight shift when he was stabbed multiple times in the neck and wounded in his right hand.

The nurse was flown to a nearby trauma center in critical condition. According to the Los Angeles Police Department, the assailant pulled out a knife and stabbed him several times. No words were exchanged between the nurse and the assailant prior to the stabbing. The police believe it was a random attack by a homeless person.

The hospital went on temporary lockdown while a search was conducted for the suspect, who got away. Police believe the attacker might live in a nearby homeless encampment, but are not releasing the security footage at this time.

The nurse has been listed in stable condition and is expected to make a full recovery. Mission Community Hospital released a statement saying it has increased security, but the statement does not go into specifics. However, increased security will not solve the issue of increased violence, which is rooted in the worsening social crisis produced by an economic and political system that is dominated by a corporate oligarchy and prioritizes profit over human life, i.e., capitalism.

Increasing the presence of police and security guards at health care facilities actually increases violence against patients, who can and have become victims of police abuse and police shootings.

In response to the September 19 attack, other health care workers immediately ran to assist the wounded nurse. “Everybody jumped in, brought him inside and took him someplace to take care of him,” said Dr.

James Higgins, a cardiologist at Mission Community Hospital. “It’s just scary, it’s a really sad thing that it’s gonna happen at a place where you’re really trying to help people and save them. Instead, it’s almost like the opposite ... Just shows you sometimes what’s going on in the world.”

In August, this writer wrote about the increase in violence against US health care workers. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals became places of mass death and frustration, with patients and family members denied adequate care as the number and severity of hospitalizations skyrocketed. The violent act against the Southern California nurse is a disturbing expression of objective and malignant contradictions in American capitalist society.

Violence is being carried out against the working class in the form of preventable mass death from the COVID-19 pandemic, which could be contained and eliminated were it not for the profit interests of the ruling class, which rejects any public health measures that cut across its manic drive for ever greater personal wealth.

Social violence also takes the form of poverty, food and housing insecurity, unending war and the growing risk of nuclear war, and the existential threat from the climate catastrophe. All of these social crimes are bound up with the assault by the capitalist class on the living standards and democratic rights of the working class.

This past May, a 40-year-old mental health technician in South Carolina was attacked by a patient and succumbed to his injuries three days later. Last June, a patient in Tulsa, Oklahoma killed three health care workers before killing himself. In October of last year, a registered nurse in Florida was attacked by a patient and suffered a miscarriage as a result of the assault.

Both individual violence and homelessness are consequences of deliberate policies carried out by the ruling class. For the sake of cutting costs and boosting profits, governments and corporations at all levels have gutted social services, public health and mental health services for the working class, driving down the social position and real wages of workers over the past four decades.

Over the last decade, there was not a single day that the United States was not at war. Whatever their differences, the Democrats and Republicans have joined hands to allocate trillions of dollars to fund the US military machine.

In the Los Angeles metropolitan area, there is an explosion of homelessness, making it the epicenter of the housing crisis in California and the US. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority study, "Preliminary Estimation of Homelessness in LA County," on any night there are 83,347 homeless people on the streets and in shelters in Los Angeles County.

The numbers are higher if one includes the cities of Long Beach (6,000), Pasadena (1,200) and Glendale (400), bringing the total to more than 91,000. The same study reports that 224,203 individuals are homeless at least one day during the year.

When mass death is normalized in the US and abroad through perpetual war, a preventable pandemic and mass shootings, it inevitably impacts the psyche of the most susceptible individuals. As does mass poverty, homelessness and ever greater levels of exploitation of workers on the job.

The working class is the only social force that can put an end to the capitalist system, which breeds all of these social ills. This can only be done through the unity of the working class in the US with its international working class brothers and sisters, through the building of rank-and-file committees in every workplace and the struggle for socialism.



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