

2026 Healthcare Workforce Safety Report

What Safety and Security Leaders Need to Know:
An Analysis of Workplace Violence, Preparedness Gaps,
and the Technology Shaping Healthcare Worker Confidence

Executive Summary

It's no secret that workplace violence is a significant and ongoing challenge in the healthcare industry, with workers experiencing violence [five times more often than workers in other industries](#). Between 2019 and 2024, [incidents of disorderly conduct and simple assault within healthcare facilities rose](#), with simple assaults more than doubling in that time period. Other recent data highlights the persistence of this problem: in 2024, [over 80%](#) of nurses reported experiencing workplace violence within the previous twelve months, and in 2024, [91%](#) of emergency physicians indicated that they or a colleague had been threatened or attacked in the past year.

Healthcare safety and security leaders play a critical role in guiding their organizations toward proactive steps to address this challenge. Strengthening workplace security measures and employee training is not only critical for supporting the workforce and ensuring high-quality patient care, but also for addressing the industry's ongoing personnel shortages. This report highlights worker perceptions and preparedness gaps and identifies the measures healthcare leaders can take to help ensure their workforce is protected and supported.

CENTEGIX surveyed over 600 healthcare workers to examine perceptions of safety, preparedness, and the role of technology in supporting well-being and patient care delivery. Survey respondents all interact with patients, family members, or visitors at least weekly in a healthcare facility.

Healthcare Workers Are Consistently Worrying About Their Safety

Despite the healthcare industry's ongoing efforts to combat workplace violence, concerns about personal safety remain a reality for many workers. More than one in four healthcare workers reported worrying about their personal safety at work on a weekly basis, and an additional 15% experience these concerns monthly. Exposure to workplace violence continues to be widespread as well. [Over two-thirds of healthcare workers have personally experienced one or more violent incidents in the past year, and nearly three-quarters have witnessed one or more incidents.](#)

These experiences are closely linked to employee well-being. [Seventy-five percent of respondents have experienced feelings associated with burnout in the past year, with nearly two-thirds citing workplace violence and safety concerns as contributing factors.](#) In addition, almost half indicated that personal safety concerns impact their ability to deliver compassionate patient care.

26%

More than one in four healthcare workers reported worrying about their personal safety at work on a weekly basis.

Confidence in organizational preparedness varied according to circumstance. Respondents expressed greater confidence in their workplace’s ability to respond effectively to a disruptive or aggressive patient or visitor (41%) than to an active-shooter (32%). Training efforts by employers were also mixed: less than 40% of healthcare workers reported receiving both safety training and drill practice in the past year, and 15% reported receiving no training at all.

Healthcare Workers Voice What Makes Them Feel Safe

For today’s healthcare workforce, a sense of safety is shaped by a layered approach—support from both people and technology. When asked what makes them feel most safe during their workday, respondents ranked security personnel (55%) as their top choice. User-activated wearable duress buttons emerged next as the primary technology of choice (42%), followed by video monitoring and security cameras (30%).

Perceptions of safety also extended beyond daily protection to broader workforce impact. **Over half (54%) of respondents reported that safety and security measures are very important when considering employment** at a healthcare organization. Additionally, **healthcare workers rated the importance of safety tools, policies, and procedures on their job satisfaction and likelihood to stay in their roles as 4 out of 5 on average**, highlighting the importance of these measures in overall morale and employee retention.

However, despite safety’s clear impact on healthcare workers, gaps remain between expectations and organizational implementation. **Sixty-one percent of respondents felt that their organization’s safety efforts did not demonstrate strong concern for their security, and nearly one-third described their workplace safety programs as reactive rather than proactive.**

Wearable Duress Buttons Provides Healthcare Workers With Needed Confidence

Wearable duress buttons rank among the top technologies healthcare workers say would make them feel safe, yet more than half of respondents report not having access to one.

Healthcare workers ranked security personnel (55%), user-activated wearable duress buttons (42%), and video monitoring and security cameras (30%) as the top three safety measures that make them feel most safe during their workday.



55%



42%



30%

Additionally, nearly 70% of respondents said they would prefer a duress button that only shares their location when they activate an alert for help, compared to one that would track their location continuously.

Healthcare workers equipped with wearable duress buttons demonstrated 12% higher perceptions of organizational support, 19% greater feelings of protection, and 25% stronger confidence in their organization's response to active-shooter situations compared to employees without access.

Forty-five percent of workers with access to wearable duress buttons felt that the device improved their ability to provide quality patient care. Twenty-eight percent of those without access said that their ability to provide quality patient care would improve if they had one.

Lastly, workers with access to wearable duress buttons were 31% more likely to report receiving at least some safety training compared to those without access, highlighting a positive link between access to personal safety technology and safety training.

Areas for Improvement in Healthcare Workplace Safety Remain

While progress in healthcare workforce safety has been made over the past few years, opportunities for improvement remain. Key areas of focus for sustaining workforce confidence and retention, well-being, and quality patient care include:

- Strengthening safety preparedness
- Expanding access to personal safety technologies
- Layering training, human support, and proactive safety strategies

Without meaningful progress in these areas, workforce confidence, retention, and ultimately patient care remain at risk.

NOTE: See page 11 for Methodology details. All percentages cited throughout this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number and, therefore, may not equal exactly 100%. Specific data available upon request.



68%

Nearly 70% of respondents said they would prefer a duress button that only shares their location when they actively trigger an alert for help, compared to one that would track their location continuously.

Healthcare Professionals Face Ongoing Workplace Safety Concerns

The healthcare industry has made ongoing efforts to combat workplace violence, notably through the introduction of legislation such as the Save Healthcare Workers Act ([H.R. 3178/S.1600](#)) and The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act ([H.R. 2531](#)). Yet, for many, these policy efforts have not eased the persistent reality of violence. Healthcare workers continue to have ongoing personal safety concerns that impact their day-to-day experiences and their ability to deliver quality patient care.

By understanding these perceptions, safety and security leaders can begin to strengthen the culture of safety for their clinicians.

- **Workplace safety concerns are a frequent reality for healthcare workers.** More than one in four healthcare workers (26%) reported worrying about their personal safety on a weekly basis, and an additional 15% are experiencing these concerns monthly.
 - Daily safety concerns are more common among women than men, with 14% of women reporting daily worry compared to just 8% of men.
- **Exposure to workplace violence is all too routine.** Over two-thirds (68%) of healthcare workers **have personally experienced** one or more violent incidents in the past year, and nearly three-quarters (74%) **have witnessed** one or more incidents.
 - The rates of experiencing and witnessing workplace violence were higher for hospital workers: In the past year, 83% of hospital workers reported experiencing workplace violence, while 86% reported witnessing incidents.
- **Confidence in organizational preparedness is uneven.** Respondents expressed greater confidence in their workplace's ability to respond to a disruptive or aggressive patient or visitor (41%) than to respond effectively to an active-shooter (32%).
- **Safety impacts healthcare workers' ability to deliver compassionate care.** Almost half of healthcare workers surveyed (48%) indicated that concerns about personal safety impact their ability to deliver compassionate patient care.
 - Among hospital workers specifically, this percentage is even higher (63%).

In order for the healthcare industry to truly mitigate the violence that plagues it, healthcare leaders need to better understand what makes their healthcare workers feel safe, and put the necessary people, tools, and protocols into place.

48%

Almost half of healthcare workers indicated that concerns about personal safety impact their ability to deliver compassionate patient care.

Workplace Safety: A Combination of People and Technology

For today's healthcare workforce, a sense of safety is shaped by a combination of people and technology. Pursuing a layered safety plan that meets the unique needs of both staff and patients is critical to enabling more positive outcomes when seconds matter.

- **When it comes to safety, human support ranks highest.** When asked what does—or would—make them feel most safe during their workday, respondents ranked security personnel (55%) as their top choice.
- **Healthcare workers also prioritize technology for increased safety.** User-activated wearable duress buttons emerged as the primary technology of choice (42%), followed by video monitoring and security cameras (30%).
 - Security personnel ranked first for both men (52%) and women (59%).
 - Both men (35%) and women (51%) selected user-activated wearable duress buttons as the top safety solution desired.

Having the organizational support, tools, and training to report and mitigate workplace violence is critical, however, a grim picture still exists for healthcare workers' perception of current safety efforts. The prevalence of a threat management team within organizations [dropped by almost 20% from 2023 to 2024](#), with staffing capacity, leadership turnover, and competing operational priorities noted as potential sustainability conflicts. Incident reporting also remains a persistent weakness – aggression and violence are overwhelmingly depicted as “part of the job”. Those who speak up fear being perceived as unable to handle the pressures of their roles, and others don't believe anything will change even if they do speak up.

- **Perception gaps exist between safety initiatives and worker confidence.** Over sixty percent (61%) of healthcare workers feel their organization's safety efforts do not demonstrate a strong concern for their security.

“It's about being proactive in this day and age, and not waiting for an incident to occur, but really investing in your employees' safety and well-being.”

Kala Bettis,
MA, LSC, LAC, LPC



- **Safety efforts are still viewed as reactive.** About one-third (31%) described their workplace safety programs as reactive rather than proactive.
- **Training and readiness gaps are significant:** Just 36% of healthcare workers reported receiving both safety training and drill practice in the past year, and 15% reported receiving neither.

Considerable effort should be made to increase the presence of threat management teams, encourage incident reporting through accessible and automated solutions, implement training plans to boost preparedness, and integrate technology into existing protocols and procedures.

61%

Over sixty percent of healthcare workers feel their organization's safety efforts do not demonstrate a strong concern for their security.

Addressing the Healthcare Workforce Crisis: Safety Impacts Recruitment and Retention

Safety plays a key role in both recruitment and retention of healthcare workers. More than 50% of respondents—including 58% of women—said staff safety and security measures are **very** important when considering employment at a healthcare organization. Additionally, **75% reported experiencing feelings associated with burnout in the past year, and among those, nearly two-thirds (66%) cited violence and safety concerns as contributing factors.** Healthcare workers also ranked the importance of safety tools, policies, and procedures on their job satisfaction and likelihood to stay in their roles as 4 out of 5, underscoring the significant role these measures play in morale and employee retention.



Wearable Duress Buttons Empower Healthcare Workers With Confidence

Studies show that implementing safety measures can result in an [18%](#) to [66%](#) reduction in violent incidents. Healthcare leaders should invest in tools that not only make workers feel safe, but also enable faster response times to help mitigate incidents and their severity—ultimately minimizing trauma, and costs associated with medical care, lost workdays, and staffing.

- **Demand for wearable safety technology outpaces adoption.** Wearable duress buttons rank among the top technologies healthcare workers say would make them feel safe, yet more than half (54%) of respondents report not having access to one.
 - Among healthcare workers who have access to a wearable duress button, nearly 9 out of 10 (89%) reported that it increases their sense of safety at work.
 - Among healthcare workers who do not have a wearable duress button, two-thirds (67%) said having one would increase their sense of safety at work.
- **Wearable duress buttons provide support, protection, and confidence.** Employees equipped with wearable duress buttons demonstrated 12% higher perceptions of organizational support, 19% greater feelings of protection, and 25% stronger confidence in their organization’s ability to respond effectively to active-shooter scenarios compared to employees without access.
- **Access to wearable duress buttons impacts patient care.** 45% of healthcare workers with access to wearable duress buttons felt that the device improved their ability to provide quality patient care. 28% of those without access felt that their ability to provide quality patient care would improve if they had one.



Healthcare Workers Don’t Want to Be Tracked

Real-time locating systems (RTLS) were historically used to track assets in hospitals, and have since evolved to include features like wearable duress buttons and employee monitoring. While promoted to enhance safety, continuous location monitoring can foster a culture of distrust, leaving employees feeling surveilled rather than supported, and hindering adoption. For safety initiatives to succeed, they must be perceived as protective, not intrusive. **In fact, 68% of respondents said they would prefer a wearable duress button that only shares their location when they activate an alert for help, versus one that continuously tracks locations.** Women, in particular, preferred user-activated buttons 13% more than men.

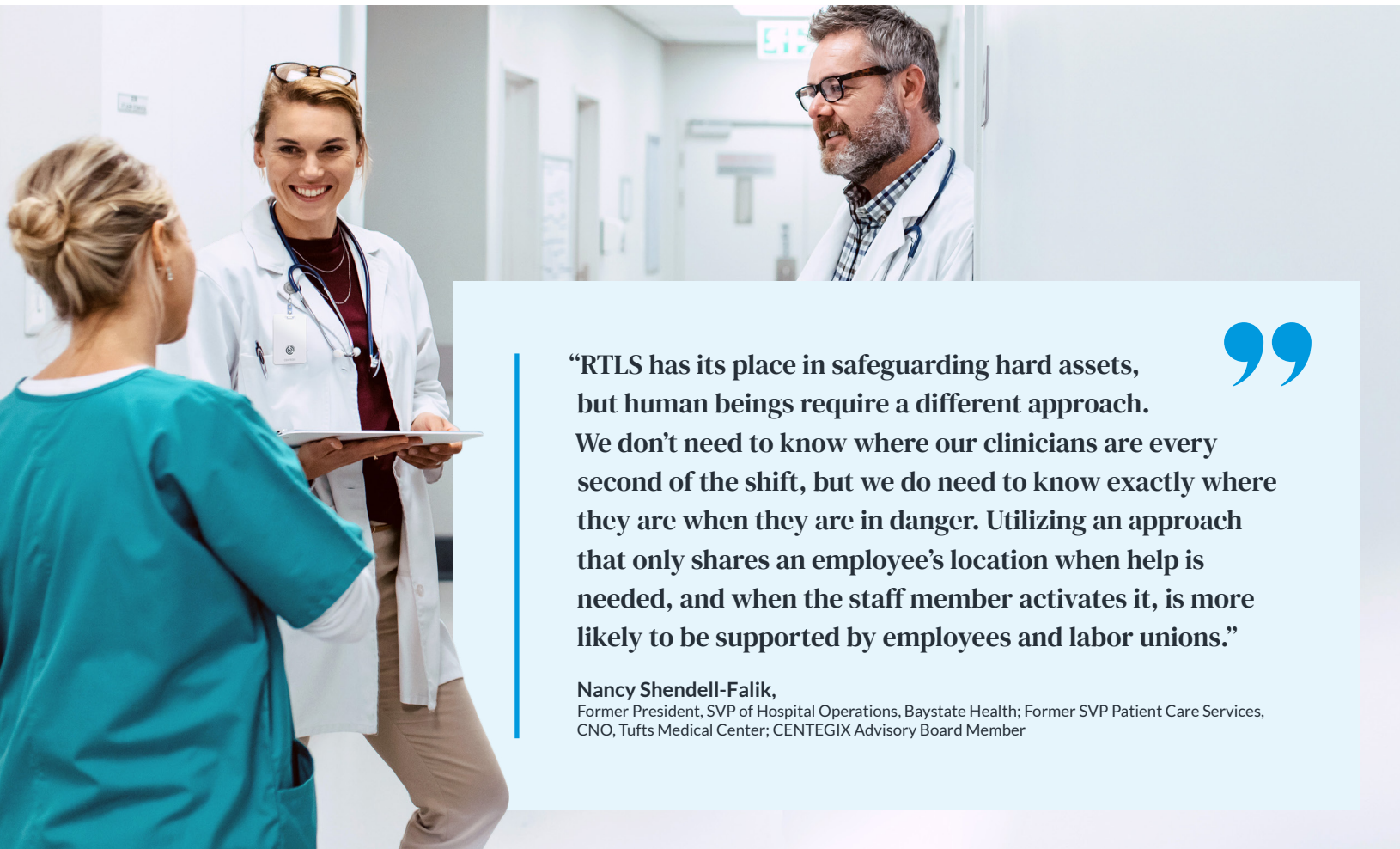
- 30% of hospital workers without access to a wearable duress button believed their ability to provide quality patient care would improve if they had access to one.

- **Safety technology and training go hand in hand:** Workers with access to wearable duress buttons were 31% more likely to report receiving at least some safety training compared to those without access.

Wearable duress buttons help provide both support and protection for the healthcare workforce, enabling staff to more confidently focus on patient care. As healthcare safety and security leaders continue to address workplace violence, adopting wearable duress technology should be a top consideration if not already in place.

45%

Nearly half of healthcare workers with access to wearable duress buttons felt that the device improved their ability to provide quality patient care.



“RTLS has its place in safeguarding hard assets, but human beings require a different approach. We don’t need to know where our clinicians are every second of the shift, but we do need to know exactly where they are when they are in danger. Utilizing an approach that only shares an employee’s location when help is needed, and when the staff member activates it, is more likely to be supported by employees and labor unions.”

Nancy Shendell-Falik,
Former President, SVP of Hospital Operations, Baystate Health; Former SVP Patient Care Services, CNO, Tufts Medical Center; CENTEGIX Advisory Board Member

Creating a Culture of Safety

Achieving a safer environment requires healthcare leaders to move beyond isolated solutions. Comprehensive strategies that address protection, preparedness, and worker confidence can create a positive and successful workplace. While clinicians understand the day-to-day workplace risks, they want to feel that their organization has done its best to ensure their safety—from training to technology implementation.

- 1. Healthcare organizations must take a holistic, layered approach to safety plans—there is no one-size-fits-all solution.** Adopting comprehensive, layered strategies that balance technology, training, privacy considerations, and emergency preparedness to address the full spectrum of workplace violence is critical. As risk continues to evolve, so must readiness and response capabilities to meet current and future needs.
- 2. Safety device adoption must be rooted in support, not surveillance.** Healthcare workers don't want to be surveilled, and providing safety solutions with continuous monitoring can foster environments of distrust. Getting this right is critical, especially as the industry faces an ongoing workforce shortage alongside significant burnout and turnover.
- 3. Investing in tools that make healthcare workers feel safe, enable a faster response, and facilitate quality patient care is essential.** Providing wearable duress buttons empowers healthcare staff to signal for help discreetly, enabling them to get support whenever and wherever they need it.
- 4. While basic safety training and de-escalation protocols are often the most obvious workplace safety measures, hands-on, scenario-based training is equally critical.** Comprehensive training that encapsulates both safety training and drill practice should be non-negotiable for today's healthcare workforce. In order for staff to feel fully confident in their ability to mitigate violent incidents, being prepared for any type of incident—whether it is a disruptive patient or an outside assailant—is crucial.
- 5. To recruit and retain talent effectively, healthcare organizations must have proactive safety measures in place.** During this time of significant workforce shortages, safety tools, policies, and procedures could be the make or break for healthcare organizations looking to attract and keep top talent. Having a proactive approach to workplace safety, including both human and technological support—will set healthcare organizations up for success.
- 6. Healthcare organizations need to prepare for active shooters.** From 2000 to 2019, there were [146 shootings in U.S hospitals](#), 60% of which occurred after 2010. Today, many healthcare workers report suboptimal confidence in their workplace's ability to respond effectively to these events. Proactive training, including simulations of such events, coordination with local law enforcement and emergency management, and access to technology that accelerates response times, will allow healthcare workers to be prepared in the event of an active shooter incident.

Methodology

The **CENTEGIX 2026 Healthcare Workforce Safety Report** was fielded via SurveyMonkey to capture insights from healthcare workers on critical issues, including safety perceptions, burnout, safety technology adoption, retention, and more.

The survey garnered 639 responses from healthcare workers—defined as full- and part-time employees who work in healthcare or pharma with the job function of doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider other than doctor or nurse—with the criteria that respondents interact with patients, family members, or visitors at least once per week in a healthcare facility.

The respondents answered 27 logic-driven questions, which were collected in January 2026. The target population was comprised of the following demographics:

- Male: 54.96%
- Female: 45.04%
- Respondents were distributed across the United States

Respondents who did not interact with patients, family members, or visitors at least once per week were excluded from the survey.

NOTE: All percentages cited throughout the report have been rounded to the nearest whole number and, therefore, may not equal exactly 100%. Specific data available upon request.

About



CENTEGIX® is an industry leader in innovative safety solutions for all types of workplaces. The cloud-based CENTEGIX Safety Platform® is the center for layered safety plans and initiates the fastest response time for emergencies, from the everyday to the extreme, anywhere on campus. Leaders nationwide trust CENTEGIX's innovative safety solutions to empower and protect people every day. For more information, visit www.centegix.com.

