PURPOSE
To describe the impact of an ED workplace violence awareness/prevention program that started with a violent triage incident in 2003 and led to a system-wide interdisciplinary approach to address the issue of WPV and to implement evidence-based changes.

SIGNIFICANCE
- Violence in the community is spilling into the ED’s across the nation.
- In 2009, The U.S. Department of Justice reported an estimated frequency of 4 violent crimes per 1000 employed persons in the workplace and 10.2% of these crimes were against people in the medical field.

BROKEN WINDOW THEORY
- Purports that tolerating lesser criminal acts, such as vandalism, in a community creates a “milieu of acceptance” to crime, thus allowing an escalation to take place because no barriers are created or enforced to stop the violence.
- The community in this instance mirrors the social disorder that occurs in the emergency department when the patient or visitor senses little resistance to their disruptive behavior.
- Subsequently, the behavior, if unchecked, often times will escalate from verbal outbursts to physical violence.

INTERVENTIONS
- Interdisciplinary ED workplace violence committee
- Enhanced physical security
- Staff Education
- Development of a reporting tool
- Post-incident debriefings
- Flagging violent patient charts while maintaining confidentiality
- De-escalation training
- Increasing security presence

OUTCOMES
- Increased reporting of violence
- Strong relationship with law enforcement
- Workplace violence prevention as a consideration in facility design
- Awareness was measured by the number of staff completing a computer-based learning module, increased from 72 completions in 2005 to 4,620 in 2011
- Most importantly, in 2011 one nurse testified before the KY state senate and house on this topic; at her urging legislation was introduced. Senate Bill 58 which supported tougher penalties for assaulting an ED healthcare worker passed unanimously through the KY General Assembly and was signed by Governor Steve Beshear on April 11, 2012.