

# Mitigating Targeted Violence in Health Care Settings

**H**ospitals  
Against  
Violence

## Topic: Threat Assessment and Threat Management

### Background

Targeted violence in health care refers to intentional and harmful acts where health care professionals, patients and health care facilities are specifically singled out as targets. Such acts of violence can take many forms, including physical assaults, verbal threats, harassment, and even large-scale attacks. Targeted violence compromises access and delivery of care, creates hostile work environments, and impacts the overall safety and quality of health care delivery.

Targeted violence in health care is a serious and growing concern among patients, workers, providers, and communities.

To assist in addressing these concerns, the AHA has partnered with the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit to promote violence prevention strategies and address the escalating threats and acts of targeted violence against health care facilities and their workforce. Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) teams are effective protective measures designed to prevent — not predict — potential acts of targeted violence.

Through our partnership with the FBI, the AHA will offer a full suite of resources for hospitals and health systems to begin implementing threat assessment and threat management principles or enhance their existing BTAM efforts.

### FBI's Behavioral Threat Assessment Center

In 2010, the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit created the Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC), which is the only national-level, multiagency, multidisciplinary taskforce in the federal government focused on the prevention of terrorism and targeted violence. As part of the FBI's efforts to address threats of targeted violence through prevention and early intervention, the Behavioral Analysis Unit established the National Threat Assessment and Threat Management (TATM) initiative to educate, lead, and support the incorporation of BTAM principles into FBI investigative operations.

The implementation of BTAM principles was designed to prevent acts of targeted violence before they occur, consistent with the FBI's authority to disrupt, mitigate and prevent federal crimes and threats to national security.

Through its nationwide network of BAU Threat Management Coordinators, the BTAC engages in operational support on concerning law enforcement cases around the country, assessing over 350 persons of concern annually, and developing strategies to manage the threats they pose. In cases where a mass casualty event has occurred, BTAC personnel deploy to assist local investigators in determining what may have motivated a particular offender. Additionally, BTAC has published landmark academic research on pre-attack behaviors of active shooters and lone offender terrorists.

### Who is an FBI Threat Management Coordinator?

The threat management coordinator is BTAC's primary point of contact in the FBI Field Office for BTAM-related matters. All threat management coordinators receive advanced training, mentoring, continuing education, and BAU support. They work with local law enforcement stakeholders to build BTAM knowledge, capability and resources across FBI Field Offices and with other local partners in the public and private sectors.

Visit the AHA's and the BTAC's websites below for more resources on mitigating targeted violence.

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Studies have proven that **before** most targeted attacks, someone observed concerning behaviors that were signs that the person was on a pathway to violence. The people who noticed were often friends, family, or coworkers.

You may be in a unique position to observe concerning signs from the patients and families you serve. Educating yourself on what to look for can be the key to preventing an act of targeted violence in [your community](#).

## FBI's Behavioral Threat Assessment Center A Tiered Approach for Addressing Concerns and Targeted Violence:

1. Discuss concerns with a trusted individual.
2. Discuss concerns and observations with a supervisor.
3. Check local resources for community threat assessment teams, mental health providers or social services resources available to help someone who is struggling with violent thoughts.
4. If you decide to contact law enforcement, you may contact your:
  - **Local Police Department.** Call your local police department on the phone or walk in to report your concerns in person. Ask if they have a law enforcement Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team (BTAM).
  - **FBI Field Office.** Report your concerns to the FBI by visiting [tips.fbi.gov](https://tips.fbi.gov), calling **1-800-Call-FBI** or visiting your local **FBI Field Office**.

Visit the websites below for more resources on mitigating  
targeted violence in health care settings.