

**Statement from Atrium Health**

Sent in response to questions from NCHN and The Charlotte Ledger  
Sept. 1, 2023

**(In response to questions about the violence some children witnessed while in Atrium E.R.s)**

Unfortunately, violent acts have become commonplace in health care environments all across the country. Too often, patients and visitors subject those around them to verbal and physical abuse – especially in emergency rooms – putting care givers in harms (sic) way and distracting from their ability to attend to others who are also in need of care. Hospital staff are trained in de-escalation techniques to help avoid or mitigate such situations, whenever possible, to protect patients and co-workers.

**(In response to questions about “Michael’s” experience at Atrium Behavioral Health)**

As you were unable to provide us with the patient name, we can’t look into the specifics of the situation you describe. However, it is worth noting that, in the fall of 2021, COVID safety protocols were still in place which included visitor restrictions designed to avoid potentially spreading the virus in the emergency treatment areas. In order to better accommodate the needs of families, we did make video calls available between the patient and their families. In the current state of things, the COVID visitor restrictions are not currently in place and, in most cases, parents are able to interact with their child.

To better understand the laws regarding commitment, we would refer you to the state statutes that cover this. Ultimately, for us, our goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of the patient. It is worth noting that, as it pertains especially to children’s behavioral health, there is a severe shortage of beds, locally and statewide, to adequately house these vulnerable patients and treat their unique and individual needs. We and other health systems continue to implore the state to take immediate action and meet its obligation to these patients and their families.