

# ARE YOUR STATE'S HEALTHCARE FACILITIES SAFE?

## RESEARCH SHOWS:

*Based on a poll of more than 13,000 nurses and consistent with other research findings, 73% of nurses believe staffing on their unit or shift is insufficient.*

### IN BRIEF:

[SAFE RN STAFFING](#)

[MILESTONES](#)

[SAFER PATIENTS](#)

[RN RETENTION](#)

[REDUCED COSTS](#)

### SOLUTION

[UNIT SPECIFIC PLANS](#)

[FIXED RATIO PLANS](#)

[DISCLOSURE PLANS](#)

*“Registered Nurses make a difference.”*

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## STATE SAFE STAFFING LEGISLATIVE MILESTONES {as of 05/09}

### HOSPITAL-BASED STAFFING MANDATED RATIO COMMITTEE / PLAN

- Connecticut (2008)
- Ohio (2008)
- Washington (2008)
- Illinois (2007)
- Oregon (2002, 2005)
- Texas (2002 in regulations)

- California (1999)

### DISCLOSURE / REPORTING OF STAFFING LEVELS

- Vermont (2006)
- New Jersey (2005)
- Rhode Island (2005)
- Illinois (2003)

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**SAFE RN STAFFING = SAFER PATIENTS + BETTER OUTCOMES + RN RETENTION + REDUCED COSTS**

## SAFER PATIENTS/BETTER OUTCOMES

- Studies consistently find a connection between higher staffing levels by experienced nurses and lower rates of negative outcomes (including death)

## RN RETENTION

- Nearly one-quarter of nurses say they are considering leaving their current position because of insufficient staffing
- Nearly 60 percent of nurses say they know of another nurse who left direct care nursing because of concerns about staffing
- Retention of experienced nurses has demonstrated improved quality of care as evidenced by lower fall and pressure ulcer rates
- Nurse turnover affects hospitals' bottom line

## REDUCED COSTS

- Cost benefits derived from:
  - \* Prevention of infections
  - \* Faster identification and treatment of complications
  - \* Reduced length of stay
  - \* Higher productivity (a healthier / more stable workforce)
- It has been determined that replacement costs for a nurse are between 1.1 and 1.6 times the salary of a nurse (median salary \$60,010 in 2007)



**SOLUTION** 



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## SOLUTION

The American Nurses Association supports legislation that requires hospitals to develop and implement staffing plans that consider the unique characteristics of each care unit and shift so that staffing levels are always appropriate to the needs of patients, resulting in high quality care and patient safety.

### HOW SAFE STAFFING PLANS ARE DETERMINED

- Hospital-wide staffing committee comprised of direct care nurses and management

Plans should:

- Be specific to each unit
- Consider:
  - \* Patient needs / illness (acuity)
  - \* Staff experience, skill mix and training
  - \* Available resources such as support staff and technology
  - \* Size and layout of the unit

### HOW HOSPITALS WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

- Provisions for handling complaints
- Civil monetary penalties to be imposed for violations
- Whistleblower protections for nurses filing complaints

Also recommended:

- Hospitals post daily staffing plans for each shift
- Hospitals evaluate plans — collect data to establish links between staffing levels and patient outcomes & satisfaction, nurse retention rates

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## STAFFING APPROACHES EVALUATED

### HOSPITAL COMMITTEE/UNIT SPECIFIC PLAN

Provides flexibility / adaptability

Levels adjust based on patient needs, staff variables, and available resources

Collaboration between nurses and management; values direct care nurses input into care decisions

Considers support staff needed

### DISCLOSURE/PUBLIC REPORTING

Valuable if information is easily accessible and easy to understand

### FIXED NURSE/PATIENT RATIO

Little accommodation / flexibility; must provide coverage for all nurse breaks to ensure ratio is maintained at all times

Less flexibility for nurses to fit breaks around patient / unit needs

Only considers numbers of nurses and assumes all patients have the same or similar needs

Legislated ratios may become the maximum staffing level without regard to changing patient or unit conditions

Fails to value nurses as partners

May reduce support staff to accommodate for increase in nurse staffing



*For more information about Safe Staffing Saves Lives, a national campaign launched by the ANA to help fight for safe nurse staffing legislation, visit us at:*

**SAFESTAFFINGSAVESLIVES.ORG**