



NURSES OF PENNSYLVANIA

This is your lobby packet for Meet Your Legislator April!

In April, we need nurses in every neighborhood from every corner of the state to visit your legislators to ask them to stand with us for safe patient limits in hospitals and nursing homes. Below are the six steps to an effective legislator meeting, and this packet includes materials pages for you, and pages to give to legislators.

Find a time to visit your legislator's office + let us know!

Find your State Representative and Senator. You can use [NursesOfPA.org/Tracker](https://nursesofpa.org/Tracker) to find them and where they stand on safe patient limits. Call Mon-Fri 9am-4pm to schedule a time to meet them in their local office. Let us know when and where your meeting is by emailing us at info@nursesofpa.org.

Recruit a team of nurses to join you for your lobby visit

Legislators are most likely to listen to nurses who (a) live in their district and (b) show that they're not alone. Assemble a team by inviting nurses you know, and/or by asking us (info@nursesofpa.org) how to connect with nurses nearby. Use the sign-in sheet on Page 2 to keep track of who attends and how to reach them for future events. (Even if you know everyone, these are *really* helpful for us, so please use them!)

Use the attached informational sheets to give to give them

The attached informational sheets have the bill numbers, what we're asking for, who we are, and evidence on why safe patient limits will work and save lives. Pages 3-5 are materials to give to legislators in every meeting. Pages 3-4 have our key talking points and what we're asking for for hospitals and nursing homes. Page 5 is information about Nurses of PA. Pages 6-8 are a summary of additional research on safe patient limits, for either your use or to leave with your legislator if you like.

Share your experience of why safe patient limits save lives

Remember - *most legislators and their staff really don't know this, and you really do*. Don't shortcut this. If they don't understand why safe patient limits save lives, why would they support them?

Ask if the legislator will co-sponsor House Bill 867 / Senate Bill 450 for limits in hospitals, and support safe patient limits for nursing homes

Beware of legislators and staff saying "we fully support you", or "I'll vote for it if it comes up", or "I love nurses". If they really support us, then they will add their name to the safe patient limits bill as a co-sponsor.

Get a photo, make a plan to follow up as a team, and let us know how it went

Most meetings require follow up before your candidate or legislator fully signs on. Get a group photo, a clear and legible photo of the sign-in sheet and send them to share@nursesofpa.org. Exchange contact info with other nurses there, and make a plan to follow up by phone until your legislator signs on. Lastly, make sure to fill out our report form at NursesOfPA.org/LobbyReport to share details of how it went to incorporate your experiences into our lobbying plan and strategy!



NURSES OF PENNSYLVANIA

Meeting with: _____ Date: _____

Welcome! Sign in so we can stay in touch and share the outcomes and what comes next. **Please complete all fields.**

First Name	Last Name	Email	Cell	Zip Code
Florence	Examplername	Florence.Nightingale@Example.com	555-555-5555	15212

The Hospital STAFFING CRISIS



Pennsylvania is in a patient safety crisis. Unprecedented levels of short-staffing are leading nurses to leave the profession in record numbers, and patients are suffering. In hospitals, safe patient limits would dramatically improve bedside care:

- Safe Patient Limits could prevent the deaths of 1 in 10 surgical patients.¹
- Each additional patient assigned to a nurse increases the risk of patient death by 7%. Many nurses are now two to four patients over a safe nurse-to-patient ratio.

People are dying because of short staffing.

A recent survey of 1,000 bedside nurses across Pennsylvania found²:

- 94% say their facility does not have enough nursing staff.
- 95% have been unable to provide the best care as a result.
- 84% said high turnover is a problem where they work.



Legislators must pass bipartisan safe patient limit laws for PA Hospitals, which 90% of nurses want.

It's time to end the crisis and improve care for all Pennsylvanians.

Solution:



YES! Safe Patient Limits save lives and improve care in our communities.

We are asking legislators to co-sponsor House Bill 867 sponsored by Rep. Gene DiGirolamo and Senate Bill 450 sponsored Sen. Maria Collett RN that would establish safe patient limits in Pennsylvania Hospitals.

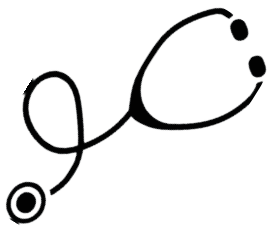


NO! Staffing committees are false solutions bedside nurses know will not fix the crisis.

We are asking legislators to oppose staffing committees legislation, which would weaken safe staffing in Pennsylvania. With committees, nurses can only make non-binding suggestions, which results in a lot of talk but no action.

¹<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12387650>

²<http://nursesofpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Nurses-of-Pa-Patient-Care-Crisis-Report.pdf>



The Nursing Home STAFFING CRISIS

Because of short staffing, nursing home caregivers are leaving the bedside in droves and providers are struggling to recruit and retain new employees.

Caregivers are working double shifts and providers are relying more and more on temporary agency staff. Every day, caregivers wonder when they will leave the bedside for less stressful work.

These issues are putting our most vulnerable citizens at risk.

Without a strong workforce, the men and women being cared for in nursing homes across the state are not getting the care they deserve.

And it's all happening at a time when Pennsylvania is transitioning to Managed Care and requiring higher care standards. Without improved staffing standards, Pennsylvania can not successfully make this transition.

"Nursing homes can't keep relying on caregivers like me to work overtime and double shifts. Regulations need to change so we can provide the best care to our residents. They're counting on us."

-Yetta Timothy,
CNA



NURSES OF
PENNSYLVANIA
United for Quality Patient Care

That's why caregivers across the state are coming together to demand changes to Nursing Home Regulations, which haven't been updated in over a decade.

It's time to end the crisis and improve care for our seniors.

1 Increase the State Staffing Standard to 4.1 Hours of Care.

Current regulations require a minimum of only 2.7 hours of care for each resident per day.

Overwhelming research evidence shows that higher nurse staffing levels are associated with better nursing home care. Research studies and experts show the need for a minimum of 4.1 total nursing hours per resident day, including 2.8 to 3.6 hours of nurse aide care per resident day depending on resident characteristics.

➔ Urge the Department of Health to increase the minimum staffing standard to 4.1 hours of care.

2 Increased Funding Goes to the Bedside.

To meet the demand for improved staffing, the Commonwealth will have to increase funding for nursing home care. Increased funding should include policies and oversight that make sure it reaches direct care providers.

➔ Urge Governor Wolf to assure that increased funding for nursing homes be dedicated to hiring more staff, increasing wages, providing affordable health care, and enhanced training for caregivers to improve care.

4.1 **for
EVERYONE**
It's time to improve
nursing home staffing



Nurses of Pennsylvania

We are a grassroots movement of nurses united for patient safety and better quality care.

We were formed in May 2017 by 80 nurses in Pittsburgh and Scranton. Since then 15,000 nurses have taken action with us in our movement for safe patient limits legislation.

We are in every county, every house and senate district, and every corner of this state. An average of 65 people in all 203 House Districts and 102 people in all 50 Senate Districts have taken part in our movement for safe patient limits.

We are union and non-union nurses. *(10% union, 90% non-union)*

We are bipartisan. *(24% Republican, 29% Democrat, 47% Independent)*

Nurses are taking our patient advocacy to the legislature.

Since we started in 2017, over 11,000 nurses have signed our petition for safe patient limits. We have made over 2,000 calls to our legislators and held over 300 meetings with legislators, and we're just getting started!

Nurses are speaking out for our patients and our profession.

"When patients think of a nurse, they think of someone that will be taking care of them to assist them in getting better or at least feeling better. We owe them the best possible care we are capable of giving, and that means standing up for them not just inside the medical facility but here fighting for safe patient limits"

- Eileen Kelly RN, Sheffield

"The question is: if this was you or your family member would you want them to get the proper care they need? Because the only way to do that is to pass safe patient limits legislation."

- Debbie Vandover RN, York

"We, as nurses, are the holders of the sick and the dying, the helpless, or those who may simply have lost hope. We need safe patient limits now."

- Denelle Weller RN, State College

STAY CONNECTED:



Nurses of Pennsylvania



NursesofPA.org



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Safe Patient Limits: Benefiting Nurses and Patients

Research Summary

Short-staffing leads to more patients dying. Safe ratios would save patients' lives.

- **Every additional patient-per-nurse in a Pennsylvania hospital increases that patient's risk of death by 7%.**¹ Surgical patients in hospitals with 8:1 ratio have a 31% higher risk of death. In many PA hospitals, nurses now have 2-6 additional patients.
- Introducing safe nurse-patient ratio laws in Pennsylvania is projected to reduce hospital patient deaths by 10.6%.²
- Research from other states suggests that short-staffing increases patients' risk of death by between 4 and 6%. This risk is higher within the first 5 days of admission.³
- Lower patient-to-nurse staffing ratios have been significantly associated with lower rates of hospital mortality, failure to rescue, cardiac arrest; hospital-acquired pneumonia, respiratory failure; patient falls (with and without injury); and pressure ulcers.⁴
- Higher numbers of patients per nurse was strongly associated with administration of the wrong medication or dose, pressure ulcers, and patient falls with injury.⁵

Safe staffing saves money by reducing nurse burnout and reducing temporary staffing

- According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the average RN cost-per-hire is around \$2,820.⁶ Other studies estimate the overall turnover cost per RN at \$65,000. Another study showed that the average hospital is estimated to lose about \$300,000 per year for each percentage point increase in annual nurse turnover.⁷
- In addition to enforcing mandatory overtime, employers often use supplemental nurses to temporarily fill gaps in nurse staffing. These temporary nurses are more likely to be concentrated in hospitals with poor staffing rates and inadequate resources.
- Temporary nurses are often compensated at rates 25 percent to 40 percent above the average RN's wages, further adding to cost and contributing to resentment among permanent nurses.⁸
- Supplemental nursing staffs are expensive, especially when they are brought in from outside agencies. Hospitals generally pay between \$250,000 and \$400,000 for staffing agency services for every one million dollars spent on temporary-nurse staffing.⁹
- As the percentage of temporary nurses employed goes up, the quality of patient care tends to go down. The percentage of nurse work-related injuries is significantly higher in hospitals where temporary nurses made up more than 15 percent of the total nursing staff.¹⁰

Safe Patient Limits Are Cost Effective

- Safe staffing improves nurse performance and patient-mortality rates, reduces turnover rates, staffing costs, and liability.
- A 2009 study found that adding an additional 133,000 RNs to the hospital workforce across the U.S. would produce medical savings estimated at **\$6.1 billion** in reduced patient care costs. This does not include the additional value of increased productivity when nurses help patients recover more quickly, an estimated \$231 million savings per year.¹¹
- If hospitals could reduce their proportion of burned-out nurses to 10 percent from the 30 percent that is typical, according to the 2010 University of Pennsylvania study, hospitals could prevent

4,160 cases a year of the two most common hospital-acquired infections and save over **\$41 million**.¹²

- One study in the Journal of Health Care Finance reported that increased nurse staffing did, indeed, increase operational costs for hospitals; however, it did not decrease the hospitals' overall profitability.¹³
- Safe-staffing ratios also reduce the additional costs of supplemental nurses and staffing agencies, as nurse retention tends to go up with safe-staffing.

There is not a shortage of registered nurses in PA. But dangerous short-staffing is driving nurses to leave bedside care.

- Pennsylvania has (and will have) more than enough licensed registered nurses. The PA Department of Health regularly surveys all RNs and LPNs renewing their license. The most recent survey showed only 76% of RNs were employed in nursing, with 6% unemployed.¹⁴ Pennsylvania is projected to have a surplus of 5% (8,200) RNs by 2030.¹⁵
- Pennsylvania is also training and graduating more than enough registered nurses. Enrollment in Pennsylvania RN programs has increased by 49% since 2003 (from 15,651 to 23,278), and by 138% since 2002 (from 2,939 to 7,003).¹⁶
- There is, however, a serious problem with nurse retention. Nurse burnout and turnover in Pennsylvania has reached record-high levels in the last 2-3 years. Our survey of 1,000 bedside nurses last year found 79% reported increased turnover since they started.¹⁷
- Short-staffing is the single biggest driver of nurse burnout and turnover. In the PA Department of Health's most recent licensure survey, the highest factor of 'job dissatisfaction' was staffing (37% unsatisfied), and for respondents under fifty who were planning to leave nursing the most common reported reason was stress/burnout.¹⁸
- Improving staffing to safe levels would reduce nurse burnout/turnover, encourage more licensed nurses to return to the bedside, and make the single biggest difference in improving nurse retention, patient safety and saving hospitals the cost of high turnover.
- The introduction of safe ratio laws has been proven to increase the 'supply' of working nurses. After passing a ratios law in 2004, the California Board of Nursing reported a 60% increase in applications for nursing licenses from other states,¹⁹ a 4% increase in RNs overall, and an 18% increase in the number of applicants for the certifying exam.²⁰

Research Summary Endnotes

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