



ULSTER COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ulster County Legislators call for Safe Staffing for Quality Care

Ulster County Legislators will be considering a resolution that supports New York State setting minimum standards for nursing staff at hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Legislator Jeanette Provenzano (D - Kingston), sponsor of Resolution feels minimum nurse to patient standards are essential to protect New York patients.

“Studies prove that setting minimum standards for hospital staffing improves patient outcomes and saves lives”, Provenzano said quoting from study reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, “and as consumers, the public has a right to know what staffing levels are when they choose a hospital.”

Assembly Bill 01548 and Senate Bill 00782 – also known as the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act - have been introduced in the 2015-2016 New York State Legislative Session to amend Public Health Law to require all acute care facilities and nursing homes to meet standards for appropriate staffing ratios of nursing and unlicensed direct care staff. If adopted it would establish minimum nurse to patient ratios based on peer-reviewed academic research and evidence based recommendations. The proposed amendment would require public disclosure of facility staffing requirements and a Residential Health Care Facility Council would be established that would assist in the development and maintenance of required minimum staff hours of care per resident per day.

Herbert Litts (R-Lloyd /Plattekill), a co-sponsor of the resolution, noted a California Health Care Foundation report that stated hospital income rose dramatically from \$12.5 billion to more than \$20.6 billion after similar standards were implemented in that state.

“This would simply create minimum standards,” noted Litts, “Where ratios have been established, some hospital managers reported it was easier to secure funding, they had less staff turnover and enjoyed an increase in patient satisfaction – better quality health for all.”

If adopted in the current form, A.01548 and S.00782 would establish the following direct-care nurse-to-patient ratio as minimum standards:

- One nurse to one patient: Operating room and trauma emergency units and maternal/child care units for the second or third state of labor;

(continued)

- One nurse to two patients: Maternal/child care units for the first stage of labor and all critical care areas including emergency critical care and all intensive care units and post-anesthesia units;
- One nurse to three patients: Antepartum, emergency room, pediatrics, step-down and telemetry units and units for newborns and intermediate care nursery units;
- One nurse to three patients: postpartum mother/baby couplets (maximum six patients per nurse);
- One nurse to four patients: non-critical antepartum patients, postpartum mother only units and medical/surgical and acute care psychiatric units;
- One nurse to five patients: rehabilitation units and sub-acute patients;
- One nurse to five patients: well-baby nursery units;
- For any units not listed, including, but not limited to, psychiatric units and acute care facilities operated pursuant to the Mental Hygiene Law or The Correction Law, the Department shall establish the appropriate Direct-care, nurse-to-patient ratio.

Ulster County Resolution No. 299 supporting the passage of the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act is slated to be voted on at the August 18 Legislative Session.

“Nurses are being forced to care for 10 or more patients at once,” Provenzano warned. “That is an unsafe situation that cannot be ignored.”

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