

MANDATORY STAFFING RATIOS UNDERMINE PATIENT ACCESS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ There is no evidence that mandated staffing ratios have been effective or have improved access to care, the quality of care delivered, or improved patient outcomes.
- ✓ CMS and The Joint Commission already hold hospitals accountable for staffing plans that ensure adequate staffing levels that support the delivery of high quality and safe care delivery.
- ✓ The complexity and diversity of the healthcare environment requires that innovative care models and nursing team engagement be used in the development of staffing plans to drive quality, safety, and higher job satisfaction.



Hospital staffing should be decided at the bedside based on a patient's condition, the experience of the nurses in the unit, the technology available at the hospital, and the availability of other care team members.

Ratios Don't Address Florida's Workforce Crisis

- FHA has been a leader in addressing the nursing workforce crisis in Florida by providing actionable data on the nursing demand in the state.
- Current research indicates that Florida will be short nearly 60,000 nurses by 2035. Mandates could further exacerbate the projected future shortage we will be facing.
- Mandated staffing ratios, which imply a 'one size fits all' approach, cannot guarantee that the healthcare environment is safer or that the quality of care will be more sufficient
- Florida hospitals continue to adopt and comply with regulatory and accreditation standards to complement



Negative Impacts of Staffing Ratios



Reduces patient access

Increases Stress on the System

Loss of Clinical Decision Making

Reduction in Allied Health Staff

Impact of Staffing Ratios

- Hospital care is fluid and everchanging and should not be determined by rigid statutory standards which fail to keep up with advancements in technology, ever-changing best practices, and surges in patient volume.
- Added stressors are placed on the system when hospitals must reduce or eliminate non-nursing or "allied health professionals" to accommodate mandated staffing ratios through the utilization of higher cost staffing alternatives.

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Unnecessary Financial Burden

When similar recommended staffing ratios were introduced in Massachusetts, the state's independent Health Policy Commission researched the proposal and found that the added cost to this proposal would be around \$949 million. This type of proposal would negatively impact overall health care financial resources.

Ratios Limit Health Care Resources

California implemented staffing ratios on January 1, 2004.

- Research of their mandates has shown no systematic improvement in patient outcomes. Further it has delayed the expansion of their hospitals and limited available beds.
- Despite being the most populated state in the union, California is ranked in **40th in available beds per capita**. This means that hospitals are overcrowded and that ratios have had the opposite effect that was intended.

Nurse Staffing Ratios

FHA seeks to guard against legislative proposals that detract from patient care and add administrative burdens to our member hospital staff, such as mandated nurse staffing ratios. These mandates are a static and unsuccessful tool that cannot guarantee a safe health care environment or quality level of care for patients. Often ratios become the ceiling and not the floor.

Health Care Delivery

Hospitals and health systems across the country are working to advance patient safety, affordability and enhance value by transforming health care delivery. Mandated approaches to nurse staffing limit this innovation and increase stress on a health care system already facing an escalating shortage of nurses. This also interferes with the autonomy and flexibility of the nursing professionals delivering care at the bedside.

National View

- Medical providers, experts, hospitals, and labor studies have regularly agreed that staffing ratios are not an appropriate approach to providing the best level of care for patients.
- It is important to note that the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Joint Commission (TJC) already hold hospitals accountable for staffing plans to ensure adequate staffing levels that support the delivery of high-quality care.**
- Proposed legislation often mirrors current regulatory and accreditation standards which are already in place to ensure safe care in hospitals.

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