The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act

H.R. 2083/S.1132

The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act protects patients. Introduced on April 29, 2015 by Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and David Joyce (R-OH) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), this bipartisan legislation requires Medicare participating hospitals to establish a committee, comprised of at least 55% direct care nurses, to create nurse staffing plans that are specific to each unit. This committee approach to creating nurse staffing plans recognizes that direct care nurses, working closely with managers, are best equipped to determine the staffing level for their patients. Without adequate RN staffing, patients risk longer hospital stays, increased infections, avoidable medication errors, falls, injuries, and even death.

The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act protects nurses. Hospitals are feeling pressure to reduce labor costs by eliminating or under-staffing Registered Nurse (RN) positions. This leads to lower nurse retention rates, and readmissions. Increasing the number of RNs per patient improves clinical and economic outcomes.

The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act considers:

- RN educational preparation, professional certification, level of clinical experience
- The number and capacity of available health care personnel, geography of a unit and available technology
- Intensity, complexity and stability of patients

The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act also:

- Ensures RNs are not forced to work in units where they are not trained or experienced without orientation.
- Establishes procedures for receiving and investigating complaints.
- Allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to impose civil monetary penalties for each known violation.
- Includes whistle-blower protections.
- Requires public reporting of staffing information.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) urges your support for H.R. 2083/S.1132, the Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act. This legislation presents a balanced approach that promotes the development and implementation of valid, reliable, unit-by-unit nurse staffing plans to ensure patient safety.