

# NYSNA 2020 Convention Resolutions

## Resolution #8: COVID-19 Demonstrates Urgent Need for Safe Staffing Ratios

Submitted by the NYSNA Board of Directors

**Whereas** decades of research have established the positive impact on patient outcomes of having an adequate number of bedside nurses, working within their respective clinical areas of expertise and utilizing best practices;

**Whereas** COVID-19 has spotlighted the staffing crisis in New York's hospitals and nursing homes, and demonstrated that guaranteed minimum staffing standards are a matter of life or death for too many New Yorkers;

**Whereas** public institutions from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to the U.S. Postal Service have been politicized during this pandemic;

**Whereas** NYSDOH policy and guidance has not always been consistent with available scientific evidence or best practices for protecting the public's health during COVID-19, and the NYSDOH has repeatedly failed to listen to frontline nurses and incorporate our expertise into the policy-making process;

**Whereas** this has undermined the credibility of the NYSDOH and their work, including their widely-criticized evaluation of COVID-19 infections and fatalities in the state's nursing homes and their fatally flawed report examining the impact of proposed safe staffing legislation in hospitals and nursing homes;

**Whereas** the NYSDOH's staffing "report" recycles the skewed claim from the state's hospitals and nursing home operators that safe staffing is prohibitively expensive and what's needed instead is "flexibility," code for protecting their financial interests, after we have just witnessed how flexibility led to so many avoidable fatalities during the first COVID-19 surge;

**Whereas** NYSNA members and other frontline caregivers across the state proved to be the difference between life and death for so many patients, even as we were traumatized by the experience of working under such acute staffing shortages, knowing that having more experienced nurses at the bedside could have saved so many more lives;

**Whereas** even though COVID-19 cases have receded across New York, hospitals continue to take advantage of the pandemic and its economic fallout to cut nursing staff, ignore staffing provisions in our contracts, and violate nursing best practices and staffing norms;

**Whereas** NYSNA members have worked diligently to elect state legislators who will champion our healthcare agenda, including safe staffing legislation, health care for all, and funding to keep our hospitals and essential services up and running,

**Therefore, be it resolved:**

NYSNA will demand newly elected leaders follow through on their campaign promises, and bring safe staffing legislation forward for a vote in both the Assembly and the Senate.

NYSNA will continue to fight for safe staffing ratios in all our contracts, and organize in every facility that has already won staffing language, to make these staffing grids and ratios a reality at the bedside.

NYSNA will use our visibility and position as a trusted voice during this public health crisis to educate the public on the staffing crisis in New York's hospitals and nursing homes, as well as the urgent need to put patients at the center of healthcare decision-making, focusing on quality care, safety and improved outcomes rather than cost containment.

NYSNA will continue to promote evidence-based policy research and provide our firsthand expertise on the need for guaranteed minimum staffing standards to the media, with legislators and the general public.