



One strong, united voice for nurses and patients

A108B (Gunther)

S1168A (Rivera)

Amended bill regarding hospital staffing committees and staffing disclosure

NYSNA MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

The New York State Nurses Association represents more than 42,000 registered nurses for collective bargaining and is a leading advocate for universal access to high quality health care for all New Yorkers.

NYSNA has long advocated for enactment of legislation to establish unit specific minimum nurse staffing standards applicable to all hospitals. The amended legislation does not fully or immediately implement universal minimum nurse staffing standards, but represents a significant and concrete step toward that goal.

The amended bill would implement the following provisions, applicable to all hospitals:

- (a) Establish staffing committees composed of front-line RNs and other direct care staff;
- (b) The staffing committees will prepare and file with the state annual staffing plans that clearly indicate patient assignments for nurses and other direct care staff by unit and shift;
- (c) Hospitals will be required to comply with their annual staffing plans;
- (d) Staffing plans will be enforceable by the state DOH;
- (e) Staffing plans and actual staffing levels for each hospital unit and shift will be publicly available to patients and staff and will be posted on the DOH website to allow comparison; and
- (f) An independent commission will study the effectiveness of the new law in improving patient care and nurse staffing levels and make recommendations for further action to the legislature.

The proposed legislation will also require the DOH to establish new minimum staffing standards for ICUs and critical care units that must be incorporated in each hospital's annual staffing plan.

Individual hospital staffing plans will be required to incorporate all staffing ratios or grids negotiated by staff unions, and the legislation explicitly recognizes and preserves all collective bargaining rights and remedies, including the right of the union to bargain for improved staffing levels and to enforce negotiated staffing provisions through existing contractual mechanisms as well as through complaints to the state.

The requirement that hospitals form staffing committees to prepare and file concrete staffing plans, coupled with the enforcement and transparency provisions of the bill, constitutes a big step toward our goal of improved quality of care for hospital patients and the establishment of minimum nurse staffing standards across the state.

For these reasons, NYSNA supports this legislation and urges its immediate enactment.