



Legislation Text

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Proposed Res. No. 396-A

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation requiring the New York State Department of Health to establish safe staffing ratios to ensure all acute care facilities and nursing homes meet minimum safe staffing standards for nurses and all direct care staff.

By Council Members Cabrera, Salamanca, Rivera, Ayala, Rose, Holden, Koo, Brannan, Maisel, Levine, Adams, Moya, Miller, Powers, Reynoso, Perkins, Eugene, Barron, Cumbo, Rosenthal, Kallos, Cornegy, Chin, Constantinides and Treyger

Whereas, The term “direct care staff” refers to workers under a variety of job titles, including nurse aides, nursing assistants and personal care aides, who provide hands-on care, services and support; and

Whereas, According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), inadequate nurse and other direct care staffing levels has led to poor patient outcomes; and

Whereas, In order to maintain low operating costs, hospitals will often reduce the number of nurses they employ because they comprise the largest clinical subgroup in hospitals; and

Whereas, Studies indicate that higher nursing workloads are associated with increased medication errors, increased rates of infection and even increased mortality rates; and

Whereas, According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, each patient added to a nurse’s workload is associated with a seven percent increase in the likelihood of death within 30 days after release; and

Whereas, *The New York Times* has reported that nurses in New York City have treated up to 15 patients at a time; and

Whereas, According to a report published by Health Services Research in 2012, nursing homes that have safe staff ratios for nurses and all direct care staff have better quality facilities and improved functional

status of the residents; and

Whereas, According to a study published by Health Services Research in 2010, implementing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios is associated with a decrease in both nurse burnout and workplace injuries; and

Whereas, New York City hospitals have struggled to maintain adequate numbers of qualified nurses; and

Whereas, According to a study published in the *Journal of Nursing Administration*, nurses who work in environments with adequate staffing levels report greater job satisfaction and a reduction in the intent to leave, which leads to greater nurse retention; and

Whereas, The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other studies suggest implementing nurse-to-patient ratios leads to a decrease in operational costs for hospitals due to greater nurse retention, shortened patient length of stay, lowering penalties and reduced reimbursements resulting from poor patient outcomes, less readmission and a reduction in malpractice costs; and

Whereas, The NIH has also reported that safe staffing levels are associated with increased patient satisfaction scores and hospital quality ratings, which influence reimbursement rates from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and

Whereas, According to a study performed by Health Care Management Review, having more nursing staff can increase profitability in competitive markets; and

Whereas, In 2004, California passed the Minimum Nurse Staffing Legislation, which required the California State Department of Health to establish, and hospitals to institute, specific nurse-to-patient ratios; and

Whereas, Giving authority to the California State Department of Health provided flexibility to adjust specific ratios when needed; and

Whereas, In 2008, the California State Department of Health changed nurse-to-patient requirements for

Telemetry and Specialty Care units to mandate lower minimum nurse-to-patient ratios; and

Whereas, Studies have shown that nurses in California have reported a better quality of life and improved patient care as a result of the law; and

Whereas, New York City Health + Hospitals (H+H) expressed commitment to safe staffing during a June 2019 City Council hearing on safe staffing ratios in hospitals; and

Whereas, Dr. Mitchell Katz, H+H's President and Chief Executive Officer, stated they have implemented standard nurse staffing plans, hired and trained more nurses in a quick and effective manner, and launched a series of successful recruiting campaigns, such as Nurses4NYC; and

Whereas, New York City's H+H and New York City Council have embraced the need for safe staffing ratios, as should New York State; and

Whereas, Ensuring adequate nursing coverage for all patients is an important public health goal that will improve the quality of care in acute care facilities and nursing homes; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation requiring the New York State Department of Health to establish safe staffing ratios to ensure all acute care facilities and nursing homes meet minimum safe staffing standards for nurses and all direct care staff.

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