

VICTORY

Landmark Agreement & Passage of Safe Nurse Staffing Legislation



Safe RN Staffing Campaign

- Top priority for WSNA
- Patient Safety Act in 2007 was narrowly defeated – contentious session
- collected and synthesized the evidence-based data on nurse staffing
- web campaign – collected over 1,000 surveys and numerous stories

Partnership in WA

- Recognition of problem – patient safety & nursing shortage
- Willingness to have meaningful dialogue
- First step towards future collaboration
- Strong encouragement from elected officials

Partnership in WA

Mediated process through the WSU/UW
William D. Ruckleshaus Center:

- WSNA
- Washington State Hospital Association
- Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives
- Other unions

Partnership in WA

Results:

- Agreement to jointly support staffing legislation in 2008
- Memorandum of Agreement for ongoing work

RN Staffing Law 2008

- By September 2008, each hospital must establish a nurse staffing committee composed at least half direct care RNs.
- Staff nurses selected according to collective bargaining contract or amongst peers if there is no contract in place.
- May utilize existing committee as long as it meets the criteria.

RN Staffing Law 2008

The nurse staffing committee will develop, oversee and evaluate a nurse staffing plan for each unit and shift of the hospital based:

- Census, including total numbers of patients on the unit on each shift and activity such as patient discharges, admissions, and transfers
- Level of intensity of all patients and nature of the care to be delivered on each shift
- Skill mix
- Level of experience and specialty certification or training of nursing personnel providing care

RN Staffing Law 2008

Continued:

- The need for specialized or intensive equipment
- The architecture and geography of the patient care unit, including but not limited to placement of patient rooms, treatment areas, nursing stations, medication preparation areas, and equipment
- National standards/recommendations on nurse staffing

RN Staffing Law 2008

- Participation in the nurse staffing committee by a hospital employee shall be on scheduled work time and compensated at the appropriate rate of pay. Nurse staffing committee members shall be relieved of all other work duties during meetings of the committee.

RN Staffing Law 2008

Staffing Committee must:

- Conduct semiannual review of the staffing plan against patient need and known evidence-based staffing information, including the nursing sensitive quality indicators collected by the hospital
- Review, assessment, and response to staffing concerns presented to the committee

RN Staffing Law 2008

- The staffing committee will produce the hospital's annual nurse staffing plan.
- If this staffing plan is not adopted by the hospital, the chief executive officer shall provide a written explanation of the reasons why to the committee.

RN Staffing Law 2008

- Each hospital shall post, in a public area on each patient care unit, the nurse staffing plan and the nurse staffing schedule for that shift on that unit, as well as the relevant clinical staffing for that shift.
- The staffing plan and current staffing levels must also be made available to patients and visitors upon request.

Ongoing Work by Stakeholders

Establishment of a Ruckelshaus Steering Committee:

- Oversee the implementation of the new law
- Compile nurse staffing guidelines
- Collect, develop, and disseminate materials
- Serve as a resource and collect best practices
- Training for nurse staffing committees
- Continue dialogue on minimum nurse staffing standards and public disclosure of nursing sensitive quality indicators