



January 28, 2008

The Honorable

Dear :

On behalf of thousands of registered nurse members of the Illinois Nurses Association (INA), I am writing to tell you of the partnership INA formed with the Illinois Hospital Association in passing meaningful staffing legislation in Illinois. This proposal was passed unanimously by the General Assembly and signed in to law by Governor Blagojevich. Our proposal, now law, is similar to the federal RN Safe Staffing Act supported by the American Nurses Association.

While it is not common to have the kind of partnership we have, both organizations recognize the critical need to work cooperatively to resolve challenges in providing nursing staff to meet the needs of our healthcare system. The Illinois legislation recognizes the need to assure flexibility for hospitals while requiring meaningful input from the hospitals' direct care registered nurses into the institution's staffing plan. Rather than rely on a strict numerical ratio, the law requires that the staffing plan take into consideration a variety of factors including patient acuity, the complexity of the care needed, discharges and transfers, and other variables when developing staffing plans.

Additionally, by addressing nurses' staffing concerns it will help alleviate the nursing shortage. One of the factors driving nurses away from direct bedside care is the stress associated with higher patient care assignments that do not allow nurses to provide the level of nursing care needed for the best possible outcomes for their patients. Neither Illinois nor the nation as a whole can afford to lose experienced nurses or those newly licensed if we are to begin to effectively work together to solve the nursing shortage.

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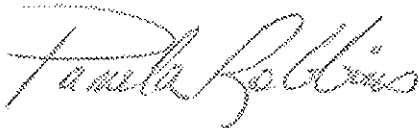
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Rep. Capps and Brown-Waite introduced the Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act (HR 4138), which mirrors the one enacted in Illinois. The members of INA hope that you will support our efforts in Illinois by becoming a co-sponsor of this bill. As the state that has led the nation in this type of partnership and staffing-by-acuity model it is our hope that it will be emulated at the national level in order to achieve passage of this critically important legislation.

INA welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information or to work with you further on this issue. Please feel free to contact our lobbyist, Sue Clark, at 309-826-9919, or via email at sue@consulting4biz.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Robbins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Pamela Robbins, BSN, RN
Acting President,
Illinois Nurses Association