

# SAFE STAFFING

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- Safe staffing practices refer to the process through which a facility ensures that there is an adequate amount of staff available per patient to attend fully to the needs of each patient (NYSNA, 2019).
- By engaging in safe staffing practices, patient stays decrease, the amount of secondary infections or diagnoses that occur decrease, and patients are less likely to experience complications, resulting in improved quality of care and lower operating costs, in addition to decreased liability.

## Proposed Ratios:

- The following ratios are proposed for application within the clinical setting.

Below are the specific nurse to patient ratios.

All Intensive Care	1:2
Emergency Critical Care	1:2
Trauma Emergency Unit	1:1
Operating Room	1:1
Post-Anesthesia Care	1:2
Labor—Stage 1	1:2
Labor—Stage 2 & 3	1:1
Antepartum	1:3
Non-Critical Antepartum	1:4
Newborn Nursery	1:3
Intermediate Care Nursery	1:3
Postpartum couplets	1:3
Postpartum mother-only	1:4
Well-Baby Nursery	1:6
Pediatrics	1:3
Emergency Department	1:3
Step-Down & Telemetry	1:3
Medical/Surgical	1:4
Acute Care Psychiatric	1:4
Rehabilitation Units	1:5

Source: (NYSNA, 2019)

## Barriers to Safe Staffing:

- Not all patients are alike – all have different needs
- Each hospital is unique. An aspect that would affect staffing availability includes the location (urban, suburban, rural).

- Mandatory nurse patient ratios don't take into account elements such as level of nurse education, skills, knowledge, and years of experience.



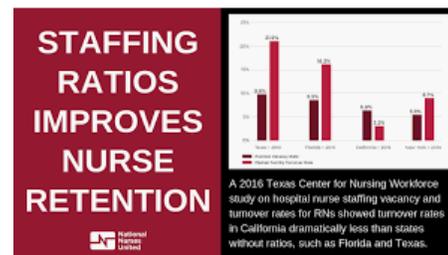
Source (NYSNA, 2019)

## NEW YORK SAFE STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

- In the early 2000s, safe staffing ratios became a requirement in many states, with California being the first state to enact such a requirement; however, there are still states that have not yet adopted these practices (Kasprak, 2004).
- New York is currently in the process of voting safe staffing requirements into law (New York State Senate, 2019).
- It is anticipated that this change in staffing requirements will result in an estimated \$3 billion dollar a year increase in the cost of care delivery in New York state (Henderson, 2019)

## CONCLUSION

- Safe staffing practices can save the lives of patients (NYSNA, 2019)
- By engaging in safe staffing practices, hospitals can work to reduce the occurrence of adverse situations for patients, resulting in improved health status and decreased complications (NYSNA, 2019).
- Ultimately, the integration of safe staffing practices serves as a cost-effective approach to care, when compared against the alternative (NYSNA, 2019).
- Safe staffing improves staff retention, decreases training costs, decreases liability to the facility, and improves quality of care for patients (California Nurses Association, 2019).
- Researchers provide clearly analyzed data within the extant body of literature that can be used to identify the most appropriate nurse to patient ratio for a given facility (NYSNA, 2019).



Source: (California Nurses Association, 2019).

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## References

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