



Proposed New York

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There has been a good deal of publicity recently on the part of the NYS Nurses Association in support of proposed State legislation to mandate nurse staffing in New York. We believe this legislation, if passed, may end up having unintended consequences for Hudson Valley healthcare providers and patients alike.

It's noteworthy that we don't know any healthcare professionals in favor of this legislation. As a matter of fact, the largest healthcare union has not endorsed this legislation. There is no correlation between mandated staffing ratios and improved quality outcomes; in fact, the opposite may occur as noted below. Patients, organizations and nurses are not all the same and variations in medical needs, available supplemental resources and nurse specialization need to be taken into account when determining staffing levels. What business owner or CEO would accept outside mandates about how to staff their own organization?

From a cost perspective, it's estimated that this legislation would add an additional \$3 billion per year to the cost of healthcare in New York without any positive impacts on care quality. Can the healthcare providers, business community and patients afford this unnecessary expense? The whole nation, and particularly New York, is already complaining about the cost of healthcare.

A few things are clear if this legislation passes:

- Steep increases in staffing costs will force a number of hospitals and long-term care facilities to close.
- Dramatic cuts will be made to non-nurse staff.
- Access to care and services provided will clearly be reduced.
- There is no professional evidence that care will be improved.
- ER wait times will increase, delaying life-saving services.
- Nursing shortages are already a problem and there won't be enough nurses available to comply with this bill as written.

In light of the above, we strongly urge the legislature and the Governor to reconsider the legislation it has on the table regarding mandated nurse-patient ratios. The dedicated people who run healthcare facilities and oversee the nursing functions know what's best for their particular patients. The healthcare sector is the most important economic driver in our region and to threaten their financial viability by an artificial mandate is unacceptable. As it currently stands, this legislation would add an unnecessarily large burden to the Hudson Valley's already over-encumbered healthcare system.

William M. Mooney, Jr. is the President and CEO of Westchester County Association.