

2003 MONA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SUBJECT: Ensuring Appropriate RN Staffing and Safe Care Environments

INTRODUCED BY: Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Changes in the health care system, the aging patient population with its attendant increase in chronic illness, continuing workplace demands on nursing, and recruitment of new nurses falling behind the demand have created a crisis situation. Measures must be taken to ensure the health of Missouri citizens while maintaining high standards of nursing practice. Current research has identified factors related to quality nursing care and positive patient outcomes which include valid and reliable staffing systems, no mandatory overtime, whistleblower protection, and collection and reporting of nursing-sensitive quality outcomes (ANA, 2001).

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHEREAS, changes in the health care system have increasingly focused on corporate and business models which favor decisions based on financial outcomes and threaten the commitment to service and quality patient care, and

WHEREAS, massive reductions in nursing budgets have resulted in fewer nurses working longer hours, while caring for sicker patients, and

WHEREAS, employers of nurses have been reluctant to implement strategies such as staffing plans based on patient outcomes while considering the health and safety of nurses, and

WHEREAS, adequate nurse staffing is critical to the delivery of quality patient care, and the appropriate numbers and mix of nursing personnel (RNs, LPNs, UAPs) is imperative for the delivery of safe, cost effective, quality care, and

WHEREAS, research comparing staffing information and patient outcomes show that the ratio of Registered Nurses to patients results in fewer adverse events and fewer patient complications, shorter lengths of stay, decreased morbidity and mortality and that an appropriate ratio is cost-effective, and

WHEREAS, ANA has developed nursing sensitive indicators that capture outcomes most affected by nursing care, and

WHEREAS, mandatory overtime is a difficult problem for registered nurses in health care facilities, due to inadequate RN staffing, facilities have used mandatory overtime as a staffing model and often as a cost savings factor and

WHEREAS, nurses are concerned about the long term effects on the nursing profession's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified nurses, and the short term effects on the health of current nurses, and

WHEREAS, complex solutions will be necessary to impact this complex problem,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Missouri Nurses Association will:

1. Seek legislative and regulatory solutions to assure safe RN staffing and reduce the use of counterproductive practices such as mandatory overtime.
2. Advocate for the use of valid and reliable staffing plans in all settings that are based on nurse competency and skill mix relative to patient mix and acuity.
3. Support identification, research, and dissemination of findings that demonstrate the link between nursing interventions, staffing levels and positive patient outcomes
4. Provide recognition for innovation through incentives and rewards to achieve or exceed the standards of Magnet Nursing Services Recognition program status

Reference:

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