



April 7, 2014

Dear ANA-NY Members,

ANA-New York is thriving and growing thanks to our committed board of directors and dedicated members who are “building a community of empowered nurses.”

With the state legislature in session, the Board of Directors thinks it is important to clarify the positions of ANA-New York (ANA-NY) and the American Nurses Association (ANA) regarding safe staffing legislation. ANA-NY included the Safe Staffing Bill (A6571/S3691), currently pending before the NYS legislature, in our Legislative Agenda. On the national level, ANA advocates for safe staffing legislation, such as the [Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act](#), utilizing an approach that emphasizes [collaboration and shared governance](#).

ANA notes that “registered nurses have long acknowledged and continue to emphasize that staffing issues are an ongoing concern, one that influences the safety of both the patient and the nurse. There is a strong relationship between adequate nurse-to-patient ratios and safe patient outcomes. Rising patient acuity and shortened hospital stays have contributed to challenges. Finding an optimal nurse-to-patient ratio has been a national challenge. However, rising patient acuity and shortened hospital stays have contributed to recent challenges. Ensuring adequate staffing levels has been shown to:

- Reduce medical and medication errors
- Decrease patient complications
- Decrease mortality
- Improve patient satisfaction,
- Reduce nurse fatigue
- Decrease nurse burnout
- Improve nurse retention and job satisfaction...”

ANA believes that “optimal staffing is essential in order to provide optimal patient care. Innovative and collaborative strategies that focus on developing long-term solutions will improve the quality of patient care outcomes.” ANA suggests that “an optimal staffing model requires an approach that recognizes unique patient care settings during specific times of day and must assess:

- Patient acuity
- Unlicensed assistive personnel
- Skills, education, and training within specific settings”

ANA provides a wealth of timely, relevant information on its [website](#) for its members on this issue, including the updated (2012) *Principles for Nurse Staffing*. In addition, ANA recently held a series of webinars on safe staffing and they can be accessed through [ANA’s CE catalog](#). ANA-NY urges its members to utilize only current, well-documented information and positions regarding safe staffing, as it is an issue that has evolved over time and use of information older than five years could be faulty or incorrect.

ANA-New York agrees with the American Nurses Association that professional nurses “have an opportunity to create innovative strategies through a collaborative effort and to develop solutions that will build a safer environment for patients and registered nurses.” ANA-NY believes that it is imperative to empower all nurses – direct care nurses, nurse managers, advanced practice registered nurses, nurse educators, nurse researchers, and nurse executives – to exercise their leadership to assure an appropriate number and skill mix of registered nurses who are able to deliver safe quality patient care in all settings across the health care continuum.

The Board of Directors commits ANA-NY to maintain a multi-faceted approach, including legislation, to address safe staffing issues in support of professional nurses and patients.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Anne Mahoney

Elizabeth Anne Mahoney, EdD, RN
President, ANA-New York