

Submitter: Eliza Rice  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

Changing staffing ratios on med-surg floors from 1:4 to 1:5 is incredibly unsafe. 1:4 is already too many patients for a nurse to safely assess for deteriorating condition and provide the high-quality nursing care patients need to improve and leave the hospital. Increasing patient to nurse ratios will lead to poorer nursing care and thus poorer patient outcomes causing increased cost to hospitals. Imagine having 5 patients to give 3-10 medications to every 2-4 hours, help to the toilet or clean up every 1-2 hours, coordinate care with PT/OT, respiratory therapy, consulting physician teams, and answer call lights for any request the patient or family has at any time. As a former med-surg nurse I can tell you that even with a 1:3 ratio, I did not have the time needed to think critically about my patients condition and do all the preventative nursing care I would have liked to do because of the mountain of tasks I had to complete to provide the most basic level of care to those patients. Preventative nursing care is what leads to reduced hospital acquired infections and thus lower cost to hospitals. Time is VITAL to being able to perform those preventative nursing cares. If hospitals want to save money they should improve nursing ratios instead of passing measures to worsen staffing ratios. Decreasing the civil penalties hospitals can be charged for not upholding safe staffing ratios will promote less focus on safe staffing at a systems level. As a nurse of 7 years, I have seen the impact that safe staffing ratios has on patient care and I urge you to oppose this measure.