

Submitter: Heather Buxman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

I am an RN care coordinator at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center. I spent 10 years in bedside nursing in med-surg, day and night shift. I am in opposition to this bill, specifically the change to allow a med-surg RN to take 5 patients during the shift. The maximum should remain at a nurse to patient ratio of 1:4 for several reasons. The primary reason is nurse and patient SAFETY. The acuity of our patients is higher than ever before on our med surg units. A vast number of studies have shown that the more patients an RN has to manage, the more medication errors occur, the more falls and hospital acquired infections. There are more staff injuries. Couple this with only have 1 CNA for a floor of 30 patients, the RNs are now being asked to do the CNA duties as well (bathing, vitals, turns). This is not only time consuming, but also physically dangerous as they are rushed and pressure to provide good care.

From a care coordination perspective, an RN needing to take on a 5th patient means less patient ambulation, more deconditioning leading to more need for higher levels of care, more rehab needs when our rehab facilities are already overflowing. Unsafe discharge plans, more readmissions. There will be longer lengths of stay in the hospital as new infections arise and other complications of the inability to provide safe care including pressure ulcers, falls with injuries, and DVTs/blood clots. There will be delays in getting IVs for patients, poor pain control which also will delay timely discharges. The effects will be far reaching.

Acute care facilities and their administration should care deeply about these issues and it will ultimately affect their bottom line (ie poor patient outcomes, longer lengths of stay, poor patient satisfaction, nurse retention). For facilities who are attempting to attain Magnet status, these ratios will prevent them from attaining the outcomes needed to even apply for Magnet.

I strongly oppose this bill.