HEALTHCARE ADVOCATES FROM ACROSS NEW YORK STATE HAVE A MESSAGE FOR LEGISLATORS: NOW IS THE TIME TO PASS SAFE STAFFING FOR NURSES AND CAREGIVERS

January 9, 2019, Albany, NY—The N.Y. Campaign for Patient Safety, a coalition of nurses, caregivers and healthcare advocates from around New York, is calling on state Senators and Assembly Members to support and pass minimum safe staffing ratio legislation in hospitals and nursing homes. The legislation would guarantee that every hospital patient and nursing home resident have appropriate access to the care of nurses and caregivers when they need it across the state.

Safe staffing levels are essential to providing quality patient care. New York patients are currently at risk because healthcare administrators are forcing nurses and caregivers to take on an unsafe level of patients.

New York needs a safe staffing law to help ensure that our patients always get the quality care they need.

Studies show safe staffing reduces occurrences of avoidable patient deaths, decreases incidents of hospital-acquired infections, shortens hospital stays, reduces incidents of workplace violence, and boosts overall nurse retention—all of which add up to significant savings for hospitals. To put it plainly, safe staffing plans would not increase costs for hospitals or nursing facilities. In fact, just the opposite: it would help contain costs and provide better care for all New Yorkers.

“This is a time to redouble our efforts to achieve equality in the lives of New Yorkers. Over 15,000 nurses in “non-profit” hospitals in New York City are now bargaining over issues that fundamentally affect access to quality care--including safe staffing ratios--that would ensure there are enough nurses and caregivers to care for our patients. Together with nurses in public hospitals, we join with health advocates, senior citizens, community groups and other unions, in calling upon our elected leaders commencing their session to pass legislation to better the lives of people across the state,” said Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN, President of New York State Nurses Association.
Mario Cilento, President of the New York State AFL-CIO said, “Healthcare workers have told their stories over and over about the challenges they face trying to provide the highest quality care possible under stressful working conditions that include inadequate staffing levels. It is time to pass a safe staffing law to ensure nurses and all healthcare workers can provide the best care possible while improving patient outcomes. The New York State AFL-CIO will continue to raise awareness about safe staffing levels until this common sense legislation becomes law.”

“The safety and quality of care that a person receives at a hospital is many times depended on number of available medical staff especially nurses. This is a patient right and community issue. The state legislature can show all New Yorkers that they care about the wellbeing of nurses and patients by passing Safe Staffing,” stated Anthony Feliciano, Executive Director of the Commission on the Public’s Health System.

“Nurses are the mind, the heart, and the backbone of our healthcare system, and nurses are saying that our patients are in danger from short-staffing. The more patients a nurse takes care of, the greater the chance of complications and even death. There is documentation of this common sense fact now, and we cannot ignore it. Set safe staffing ratios and save lives. Lawmakers need to make it happen this year because it’s the right thing to do for New York’s patients,” said Debbie Hayes, Upstate New York and New England Area Director for Communications Workers of America District 1.

“Patients are hurt by staffing issues with negative health outcomes in hospitals and nursing homes across New York. This affects all of us because, at some point, every New Yorker will have to deal with a sick family member. Let’s act now so every New Yorker gets the care they deserve,” said Maria Alvarez, Executive Director of the NY StateWide Senior Action Council.

“The state has a responsibility to ensure safe working conditions for New York’s health care professionals in hospitals, nursing homes, and out in the community so that patients receive the quality care and services they need,” said Mark Hannay from Metro NY Health. “Passage of the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act is essential for everyone’s protection.”

"Inadequate staffing creates a real risk to patient care,” said New York State Public Employees Federation President Wayne Spence. “Patients deserve quality care, and our nurses want to provide quality care. We are here to urge our state lawmakers to support Safe Staffing to guarantee that every hospital patient has access to the care of a nurse when they need it. Without safe-staffing ratios nobody wins.”

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