

Submitter: Diana Nguyen

On Behalf Of:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

Increasing the patient-nurse ratio to 5 patients to 1 nurse is another cost-saving measure that only benefits the hospital administrators. It ensures that the patients get even less quality care, face time with the RN, and actually be assisted in a timely manner. This bill is asking nurses to continue to do more with less, and we are already stretched thin as it is.

As a night nurse, I often do not have a certified nursing assistant to support me with patient cares. The number of vascular access nurses and phlebotomists are also being steadily reduced in the Oregon hospital I work at, so we are expected to pick up the slack. Therefore, I am responsible for doing all of the patients' physical assessments, helping them get to the bathroom, cleaning patients and getting them up and moving, de-escalating and containing confused and combative patients, responding to rapid responses/ emergencies, administering time-sensitive and high risk medications, learning all about their medical histories, updating their families by telephone, utilizing my nursing knowledge to determine whether a medication or an order may be inappropriate, etc.... and now multiply that by five, and we are creating systems that encourage burnout, increased mistakes, increased pressure injuries because no one was available to regularly turn a patient or help them get up, incomplete patient education, and increased preventable falls. I've had assignments with five patients before as a med surg nurse working in Maryland, and I vividly remember how often I felt like I neglected at least one of my patients because I simply did not have enough time. This bill is encouraging diminished quality care in the hospital with less face time with nurses. It is promoting nurses to know and understand their patients LESS and to be more impersonable so that we can save money on staffing.

There is no nursing shortage in the USA. Instead, there is a growing shortage of nurses that allow themselves to be put in unsafe situations, such as this ratio increase.