



Safe Patient Limits Act (HB 2604 – Crespo)

The Safe Patient Limits Act will save lives by designating limits on how many patients can be assigned to a registered nurse in acute care settings. Under current law in Illinois, there is no limit on how many patients an RN is responsible for.

SAFER FOR PATIENTS

Published studies show that with each additional patient assigned to an RN, the likelihood of a patient dying within 30 days of admission increases, and the odds of death due to treatable complications increases by 7% for each additional patient assigned. Inpatient mortality rates were 17% lower on surgical units with higher RN to patient ratios in another study.

SAFER FOR NURSES

OSHA cited understaffing in healthcare as a risk factor for workplace violence. Another published study found that the safe patient limits enacted in California reduced occupational illness and injury rates of nurses by over 30%. Notably, the nursing occupation currently generates more occupational injuries to working women than any other occupation.

BETTER FOR HOSPITALS

There is a nursing shortage in Illinois and elsewhere, which is likely linked to unrealistic workloads. Nurses and nurse managers agree that maximum patient ratios improve recruitment and retention of nurses. The average cost to a hospital of turnover for a bedside RN is \$49,500. Each percentage change in RN turnover will either save or cost the average hospital \$337,500.

- Applies to any acute care unit in any healthcare facility and require healthcare facilities to meet the safe patient limits *without* diminishing other healthcare staff
- Provides for fines for facilities that violate the safe patient limits
- Whistleblower protection for any staff reporting violations
- Requires that all registered nurses be trained, oriented, and meet competency requirements in a particular clinical setting in order to provide care in that setting
- Does not interfere with the ability of hospitals to maintain an acuity system to determine staffing levels based on acuity, so long as the specific safe patient limits in the Act are



met.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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