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HOUSE MEMORIAL 51

**50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012**

INTRODUCED BY

Brian F. Egolf

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO REPORT ON NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS AT HOSPITALS IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, there are nurse-to-patient standards proposed by national nursing organizations for specific patient groups that many hospitals throughout the United States have adopted; and

WHEREAS, nurses are required to advocate for patient needs, including ensuring the safety of patients, as no other medical profession is required to do; and

WHEREAS, nurse-to-patient ratios reflect the minimum number of nurses that are needed to provide adequate care for a maximum number of patients; and

WHEREAS, nurse-to-patient ratios help provide an optimum standard of care for patients and protect the safety of patients and hospital personnel; and

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1           WHEREAS, it is proven that when nurse-to-patient ratios  
2 are enforced, patients spend fewer days in the hospital and  
3 patient outcomes are greatly improved; and

4           WHEREAS, there are currently no minimum standards for  
5 nurse-to-patient ratios in New Mexico law and there is limited  
6 oversight and evaluation by the department of health to  
7 determine if hospitals have implemented appropriate nurse-to-  
8 patient ratios and are complying with nurse-to-patient ratios  
9 that each hospital has adopted; and

10           WHEREAS, annual review of nurse-to-patient ratio standards  
11 by the department of health is necessary to assure that the  
12 state does not fall behind national standards and that patients  
13 in New Mexico can receive the same quality of care as patients  
14 in other states; and

15           WHEREAS, input from stakeholder groups in New Mexico is  
16 essential in ensuring that standards reflect any special  
17 circumstances or conditions pertaining to the delivery of care  
18 in hospital settings in the state, and should be actively  
19 sought out by the department of health in reviewing the  
20 standards;

21           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
22 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department  
23 of health be requested to publish minimum nurse-to-patient  
24 standards that should be complied with by all hospitals in the  
25 state; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the standards should be no  
2 less rigorous than the following:

3	<u>Hospital Unit</u>	<u>Nurse-to-Patient Ratio</u>
4	Behavioral Health and Psychiatric Units	1 to 6
5	Emergency Departments	1 to 4
6	Triage - Registered Nurses only	1 to 1
7	Paramedic Base Station Radio -	
8	Registered Nurse only	1 to 1
9	Trauma	1 to 1
10	Critical Care Patients	1 to 2
11	General Medical Surgical Floor	1 to 4
12	Intensive Care Unit or Critical Care Unit	1 to 2
13	Labor and Delivery	1 to 2
14	Antepartum - not active labor	1 to 4
15	Postpartum - mothers	1 to 6
16	Couplets - mothers and babies	1 to 4
17	Combined labor and delivery	1 to 3
18	Mixed Units	1 to 6
19	Neonatal Intensive Care - Registered	
20	Nurse only	1 to 2
21	Operating Room	1 to 1
22	Pediatrics	1 to 4
23	Post Anesthetic Recovery Room	1 to 2
24	Specialty Care - Dialysis and Oncology	1 to 4
25	Step Down Unit	1 to 4

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1 Telemetry Unit 1 to 4  
2 Well-Baby Nursery 1 to 8; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following organizations be  
4 requested to provide input in review of the standards to ensure  
5 that the standards reflect any special circumstances or  
6 conditions pertaining to the delivery of care in hospital  
7 settings in the state:

- 8 A. American association of critical-care nurses;
- 9 B. association of perioperative registered nurses;
- 10 C. oncology nursing society;
- 11 D. New Mexico emergency nurses association;
- 12 E. association of women's health, obstetric and  
13 neonatal nurses;
- 14 F. American psychiatric nurses association;
- 15 G. American association of neuroscience nurses;
- 16 H. society of gastroenterology nurses and  
17 associates;
- 18 I. American society of perianesthesia nurses; and
- 19 J. hospitals in New Mexico; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health  
21 report to an appropriate legislative committee on the number of  
22 hospitals that adopt standards equal to or better than the  
23 nurse-to-patient ratios suggested in this memorial; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health  
25 include in its report the cost of implementing an oversight

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1 program that evaluates the outcomes from hospitals that do and  
2 do not implement the suggested standards; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health  
4 determine and report the cost of implementing an annual review  
5 of nurse-to-patient ratios in New Mexico; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
7 transmitted to the secretary of health.