Statement of the
ILLINOIS HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, November 7, 2017

David Gross
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Illinois Health and Hospital Association

Illinois House Health Care Licenses Committee

Subject Matter Hearing: House Bill 4100

Room C-1, Stratton Building
Springfield, IL

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Good afternoon, Chairperson Soto, Vice Chairperson Burke, Republican Spokesperson Wheeler and members of the Health Care Licenses Committee.  

I am David Gross, Senior Vice President, Government Relations of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association.  

On behalf of the over 200 hospital and 50 health system members of IHA, I want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the critical issue of ensuring that nurses and other healthcare professionals work in a safe environment.  

Madam Chairperson and members of the committee, I first want to emphasize the commitment of hospitals in our state to give the very best quality of care to patients in the **safest environment possible – in an environment that respects each and every individual who works for our hospitals – especially our nurses who are absolutely critical in delivering care to patients**. Nurses comprise the largest percentage of the Illinois healthcare workforce and are essential for hospitals and health systems to deliver care for patients and their families every day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.  

Illinois hospitals and health systems are engaged in numerous efforts to provide an excellent workplace environment and rewarding career opportunities for nurses.  

In addition, IHA, the hospital community and the General Assembly have worked together on many important laws over the past decade that impact patient care delivery and the nurses who deliver that care. When you look at the body of work achieved by the legislature, there has been great advancement and progress made to ensure the best care in the safest environment possible. These laws include:  

- Nurse Staffing by Patient Acuity  
- Prohibition of Mandated Overtime  
- Safe Patient Handling Act
• Illinois Center for Nursing
• Hospital Report Card Act
• Adverse Health Care Event Reporting

Our hospitals are also committed to nursing excellence, as evidenced by the national Magnet recognition program. **Illinois has more Magnet hospitals – 43 – than any other state in the country.**

This recognition program was developed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to acknowledge health care organizations that provide the best in professional nursing practice and patient care – including exemplary professional practice grounded in “a culture of safety, quality monitoring and quality improvement.” Nurse leaders at Magnet hospitals serve on key decision-making bodies that “address excellence in patient care and the safe, efficient, and effective operation of their organizations.”

We are committed to working with this committee and the General Assembly to address the concerns and issues that have been raised in the wake of recent, unfortunate incidents of violence involving nurses.

We have provided the proposed legislation to our members so they can review it, and provide feedback and suggestions for possible improvements.

Our initial review raises some basic concerns and issues:

- Hospitals comply with many state and federal laws and rules on workplace safety/violence, including safety training and violence prevention.

- Complying with federal requirements and guidelines related to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] as well as evolving HRSA [Health Resources and Services Administration] Hospital Preparedness efforts are part of our hospitals’ implementation activities.

- Hospitals also engage in additional voluntary workplace safety initiatives to meet accreditation standards set by leading, well-respected organizations such as the Joint Commission.

- IHA also provides our members with workplace safety and violence training.

- For example, this past July IHA held a webinar on how hospitals can create, implement and maintain comprehensive workplace violence prevention programs; in August IHA held a workshop on helping hospitals develop “active threats” plans and create a security strategy to mitigate dangers and counter
potential violent incidents – including showcasing lessons learned from the Orlando mass shooting.

- In addition, workers’ compensation insurers typically require workplace safety training, procedures and inspections – as a condition of insurance coverage.

- All hospital employees currently have a number of pathways to report safety incidents, including violent acts, in a HIPAA-compliant, protected space.

- Hospitals offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), including mental health services, to its employees.

- IHA members have expressed concern about how justice-involved persons (city, county, state) are brought to Illinois hospitals for care.

- HB 4100 does little to address the upstream issue and shortcomings of quality care for justice-involved persons in the correctional infirmary setting. Instead it attempts to shift that responsibility primarily to hospitals and their nurses.

- In addition to language already in HB 4100, IHA looks forward to discussing with legislators and stakeholders processes and standards for how justice-involved persons are brought to Illinois hospitals to ensure everyone’s safety.

*We are concerned that proposed new requirements would be inconsistent or duplicative with existing state and federal laws and regulations. IHA believes additional Illinois state law/regulation should be consistent with and not conflict with the existing body of state and federal laws and rules on workplace safety.*

IHA and the hospital community are committed to safeguarding our healthcare workforce, including nurses, and look forward to continue working with this committee and the General Assembly on appropriate and workable approaches to ensure the safety of our employees.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and I am happy to answer any questions.