IHA Update on Mandatory Nurse Staffing Ratios

April 15, 2019

STATE ADVOCACY ALERT

IHA Update on Mandatory Nurse Staffing Ratios

We want to provide a brief overview of our ongoing efforts to not only stop a harmful legislative proposal on nurse staffing ratios (House Bill 2604), but also to work out a potential alternative compromise.

For a special video message on this critical issue, please click here (runs just over 2 minutes).

Thanks to the outstanding engagement of members, state legislators have received more than 3,800 emails and many phone calls, and more than 1,600 electronic witness slips have been filed, strongly opposing HB2604. As a result of member advocacy and IHA’s numerous meetings and conversations with key legislators and our testimony at a legislative hearing, the House did not vote on the bill before its two-week spring break started last Friday.

At the same time, IHA has had two negotiating sessions with the bill sponsor and nurse unions as well as many private meetings with the sponsor over the past few weeks. We have offered the sponsor a fair and workable alternative on the nurse staffing issue – a proposal that would strengthen the existing Nurse Staffing by Patient Acuity Act and the role of nursing care committees at hospitals.

We continue to tell the bill sponsor that we are willing to work out a compromise that will help ensure that hospitals have the flexibility they need to determine the right staffing levels to meet their patients’ needs. But we have also made it clear to the bill sponsor that we cannot accept mandatory nurse staffing ratios because they are unworkable and would undermine patient access to care, without improving quality or outcomes.

The next two weeks, with legislators home in their districts, are a critical time in our advocacy efforts on this issue. We need to keep up the pressure and continue to urge legislators to oppose House Bill 2604 or any other legislative proposal that would mandate nurse staffing ratios. We urge you to meet your state Representatives and Senators during the next two weeks. Invite them to your hospital and show them how well your existing staffing system works in the best interests of patients.

We also urge you to attend IHA’s annual State Advocacy Day in Springfield on Tuesday, April 30. This is a prime opportunity for the hospital community to make a strong showing and speak with a unified voice on the nurse staffing ratios issue. There is still time to RSVP for Advocacy Day – click here.

For more information on the nurse staffing ratios issue, including talking points, fact sheets, and sample letters to the editor and op-eds, click here.

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