
Policy Statement on Nurse Staffing

The American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) is committed to safe nurse staffing to ensure quality care and optimal patient experience is delivered throughout our nation. The number of patients for whom a nurse can provide safe, competent and quality care is dependent upon multiple factors. Studies show nurse staffing levels are a determinant of patient safety, outcomes, satisfaction and nurse well-being.

Nurse staffing is a decision based on a complex set of variables under the purview of the registered nurse such as hospital type, patient population, care delivery models, unit layout, patient acuity and the education and experience of the nurse. Mandated nurse staffing ratios imply a “one size fits all” approach to patient care.

AONL believes mandated nurse staffing ratios are a static and ineffective tool that cannot guarantee a safe health care environment or quality level to achieve optimum patient outcomes. Hospitals and health systems across the country are working to advance patient safety, affordability and enhance value by transforming health care delivery. Mandated approaches to nurse staffing limit this innovation and increase stress on a health care system already facing an escalating shortage of educated nurses.

AONL is working with national nursing and health care organizations to systematically address nurse staffing to enhance value, while optimizing quality and patient outcomes.