

STAFFING STANDARDS FOR PATIENT CARE

IT IS THE POSITION OF AMSN THAT:

- Patient care assignments should be made based on the medical-surgical nurse's ability to meet needs of individual patients rather than predetermined or fixed patient-to-nurse ratios.
- Medical-surgical nurses should be involved in ongoing research and open discussions concerning staffing principles as a practice issue.

OVERVIEW:

Hospital nurse staffing levels impact patient safety and quality of care. Research indicates that nurse driven quality indicators, including value, survival after an in-hospital cardiac arrest, nurse satisfaction and patient satisfaction, improved with lower nurse-patient ratios. (Aiken, et al., 2010; McHugh et al., 2016; Silber et al., 2016)

Providing a safe environment for both the patient and nurse is a paramount concern. The patient should receive resources according to need, and the medical-surgical nurse must be able to provide the resources based on his or her licensure, education, and role. Demand for staffing guidelines comes not only from the nursing profession, but also from consumers and policy makers seeking parameters for safe, quality patient care.

Currently, no legislation has been passed on a national level regarding nursing staffing standards but the topic continues to be introduced through proposed legislation. Nurses have the responsibility to be engaged in the political process to ensure patients' rights and needs are the focus of any legislation being proposed.

RATIONALE:

AMSN supports provision of the highest quality patient care through appropriate use of staffing standards as deemed reasonable by the ever-changing standards of care; as established by health care practice.

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