

COALITION TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE STAFFING

U.S. NURSING SHORTAGE JEOPARDIZES PATIENT CARE & AMERICAN LIVES



CALIFORNIA IS DEEPLY IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL NURSING SHORTAGE

- ⌘ **NATIONWIDE SHORTAGE: U.S Dept. of Labor estimates 1.2 million nurses needed by 2014.** Currently there is an 8.5% vacancy rate at hospitals. A majority of RNs (82%), MDs (81%), CEOs (68%) and CNOs (74%) perceive a nursing shortage in their facilities - Prof. Peter Burhaus, Ph.D., et. al., Vanderbilt Univ. (Nurse Economics, March-April 2007). The shortage will only intensify in the years ahead:
 - ✓ Aging Workforce- The average RN is 48 years old, about a third of all US RNs are over 50 years old (Buerhaus Id).
 - ✓ Aging Population- As the baby boomers reach their 60s and 70s, their healthcare needs increase dramatically.
 - ✓ No Help on the Horizon- A lack of qualified nursing instructors and clinical programs impedes domestic candidates
- ⌘ **STATE SHORTAGE: Estimates predict a nursing shortage in California of 12,000 to 29,000 nurses by 2014.**

THIS HEALTHCARE ISSUE IS VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA

- ⌘ “[L]ike many states in the nation, California faces a severe nursing shortage”-California Nurse Education Initiative
- ⌘ “[O]ver half of the state’s RNs are age 40 or older and almost half are age 50 or older” - California Board of Registered Nursing.
- ⌘ There are hundreds of nurses with approved petitions simply waiting for available visas to begin their assignments in California.

THE NURSING SHORTAGE JEOPARDIZES PATIENT CARE AND ENDANGERS LIVES

- ⌘ **LACK OF NURSES COSTS AMERICAN LIVES:** Low nursing staff levels found to be a contributing factor in 1 out of 4 hospital deaths according to a study by The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).
- ⌘ **MORE NURSES SAVES LIVES:** More nurses at the bedside could save thousands of patient lives per year. Patients who have common surgeries in hospitals with high patient-to-nurse ratios have up to a 31% increased chance of dying. (Journal of American Medical Association 2002)
- ⌘ **US NURSES WANT HELP:** 65% of US RNs believe the shortage of nurses has caused a major problem in the “early detection of complications” and 78% believed the nursing shortage has negatively affected the “quality of patient care”.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SOLUTION

- ⌘ **QUALIFIED:** International nurses must obtain a VisaScreen Certificate. This verifies their educational credentials and English language ability. The international nurse must pass the same U.S. exam (NCLEX) for licensure.
- ⌘ **ETHICAL:** International nurses are most commonly recruited from India and the Philippines, both countries that educate an abundance of nurses with a goal of overseas employment to send home remittances.

CONGRESS MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION - END THE NURSE VISA BLACKOUT NOW

- ⌘ **FIVE YEARS:** Without immediate action, U.S. hospitals can expect to wait approximately five years for international nurses who must compete with IT workers and other professionals for visas.
- ⌘ **SCHUMER/HUTCHISON/DURBIN:** Please support the amendment offered by these Senators to end the visa blackout for nurses. The amendment seeks to recapture unused immigrant visas from previous years and will provide new funding for nursing education in the United States.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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