

# COALITION TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE STAFFING

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



## LOUISIANA IS DEEPLY IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL NURSING SHORTAGE

- ⌚ **NATIONWIDE SHORTAGE:** 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
- ⌚ **LOUISIANA SHORTAGE:** Some hospitals in Louisiana have nurse vacancy rates of 12% despite a 12% raise in salaries.

## THIS HEALTHCARE ISSUE IS VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF LOUISIANA & THEIR RECOVERY EFFORTS

- ⌚ Hundreds of nurses recruited by Louisiana hospitals and healthcare facilities are waiting for visas. East Jefferson General Hospital and Ochsner Health System are examples of hospitals urgently waiting for international nurses.
- ⌚ *"This shortage of nurses (in New Orleans) is creating health disparities, inflated costs, and poor quality of health care... adequate health care is not possible in the absence of nurses and there can be no real recovery without them."*  
- National League for Nursing, a leading nurse faculty and nursing education organization.

## 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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