

COALITION TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE STAFFING

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



RHODE ISLAND 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: Rhode Island has a 7% to 11% (2,000) shortage of nurses-Journal of Nursing Administration**

THIS HEALTHCARE ISSUE IS VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF RHODE ISLAND

- ⌘ In RI "[n]ursing shortfall felt most acutely in the long-term care and nursing homes"- *Journal of Nursing Administration*
- ⌘ **"The shortage for RNs in 2020 is predicted to be 35% to 55% (6,600 to 11,000 nurses)...All scenarios projected a gap, and any significant changes in the demand or supply side only exacerbated the shortfall of nurses for Rhode Islanders."** -JONA, March 2007 (Statewide Health Assessment Planning and Evaluation Study)

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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