

COALITION TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE STAFFING

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



SOUTH CAROLINA 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
- ⌚ **SOUTH CAROLINA SHORTAGE:** South Carolina has a statewide nursing vacancy rate of 12.6%

THIS HEALTHCARE ISSUE IS VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

- ⌚ *"South Carolina nursing programs do not graduate enough nurses to meet the state's need. Of the 2,000 new positions created each year, the state's hospitals fill only half with South Carolina-educated nurses...Each year, half of the state's nurses come from other states and even other countries. Because this shortage is a national problem, it is becoming increasingly difficult to entice out-of-state nurses to come to South Carolina."* - South Carolina Hospital Association
- ⌚ *"South Carolina hospitals spent more than \$45 million on temporary staffing services in 2001."* - South Carolina Hospital Association
- ⌚ *"Less than 11% of South Carolina's nurses are less than 30 years old."* - South Carolina Hospital Association

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

Coalition to Improve Healthcare Staffing ♦ www.ctihs.org ♦ visablackout@ctihs.org
Christopher T. Musillo ♦ cmusillo@hammondlawfirm.com ♦ Cindy J. Unkenholt ♦ cju@hammondlawfirm.com
Hammond Law Group ♦ 441 Vine Street ♦ 3311 Carew Tower ♦ Cincinnati, OH 45220 ♦ Phone: 513.381.2011