

COALITION TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE STAFFING

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



TEXAS 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 1d).
 - ✓ 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
- ⌚ **TEXAS SHORTAGE: The median Texas hospital RN vacancy rate is at 10.2%, approximately 13,000 vacancies.**

THIS HEALTHCARE ISSUE IS VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS

- ⌚ Hundreds of nurses recruited by Texas hospitals and healthcare facilities are waiting for visas. A **San Antonio** health care system is waiting on approximately 100 nurses; one **Brownsville, TX** hospital is waiting on 50 nurses; 26 nurses are waiting on visas to begin employment in a **Dallas Ft. Worth** area hospital; a national system is waiting on 146.
- ⌚ *"Texas is facing an unprecedented nursing shortage where the gap between supply and demand grows wider each year"- Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies, November 2006.*
- ⌚ *"Texas' nursing shortage is nothing less than a crisis"- Associate Gen. Counsel, TX Hospital Association, August 2007*

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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