

Carol Adams, RN

Public Health Committee

March 15, 20103

SB 968 An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Carol Adams and I have been a bedside nurse at Backus hospital in Norwich Connecticut for 29 years. I am here today to support SB 968 An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels.

Staffing levels in hospitals plays a critical role in our ability to provide quality care to our patients. While there are many factors that determine the adequate level of staffing such as acuity and provider mix there is no denying that safe staffing saves lives.

A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine found an increase in mortality rates of 2% to patients for each short staffed shift they were exposed to. Another, in the American Journal of Nursing documented that the failure to rescue rate at times of inadequate staffing rises dramatically. Failure to rescue means that had the appropriate steps been taken the patient would have lived. There is a great wealth of academic study that shows what any floor nurse can tell you, safe staffing saves lives.

You can read the studies, but as a nurse who works on a cardiac step down unit with some very sick patients I want you to know what it is like to be on the floor with a patient who has fallen. There has been more than one time when I have been holding tightly to a patient while calling down the hall for help but knowing none would come quick enough. When these moments happen we try to document them but as an individual nurse we can only do so much.

We work as a team with members at all different education and skill levels and we need SB 968 to ensure that hospitals are making staffing plans that incorporate this mix and that they are working to live up to those plans.

SB 698 will show us that better staffing produces better outcomes for hospitals and patients. Please support SB698.

Thank you for your time