

Mary Brennan, RN
Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

SB 968 An Act Concerning Reporting of Nurse Staffing

Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am an RN in the Ambulatory Surgery Unit at Danbury Hospital and I float to different units throughout ASU. I ask you to support SB 968.

One area I work in is the Extended Care Unit, which is where patients go after they have been released from the recovery room after surgery. This space is typically reserved for patients who will be discharged home, and won't be admitted to the hospital but still need supervision until they can leave. Staffing for this area on the night shift consists of one RN and one PCT, but during the day staffing only consists of one RN. One RN to admit and discharge up to 4 patients (minimum-- normally patients go home and more patients come in throughout the day). One RN to take care of these patients, chart in both a computer and paperwork, answer phones, ambulate patients, feed them, do discharge teaching in an adequate manner, deal with their families, and oh yeah, there is only one bathroom for these patients, so we have to clean the toilets in between each patient (and visitor) use! Meanwhile there is no one to ask to watch my patients if I have to use the bathroom. PACU is across the room and they have their own staffing issues.

I have recently given platelets to a patient (he was eventually admitted to the hospital after spending the night), and another received up to 62 units of regular insulin on my shift. When we tried to get this patient admitted for hyperglycemic control her admission was denied because she "didn't meet the criteria". No one from her family visited her while I was with her, so I also became her sole support --while there were toilets to be cleaned, and phones to be answered, meals to be ordered, etc. Plus my job of monitoring patients intake and outputs, medicating them for their complex medical problems, teaching them how to take care of their surgical issues.

Management states there isn't enough money for an additional staff (not even a PCT) for this shift. Someone is going to get hurt. I hope it isn't me and I pray it isn't a patient.

Thank you,
Mary Brennan RN