

Testimony of Marilyn Pinard, RN
SB 968 an Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels
Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

Unfortunately I am not able to testify in person. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in writing about this issue. I want to ask the Public Health Committee to support, An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing levels, SB 968. I am a nurse at Danbury Hospital. I have worked many years and have seen staffing levels decline. That makes it difficult to give the care I was taught to give so many years ago. I have been a nurse for 26 years.

Staffing ratios and issues need to be reportable. We are often staffed by a "grid" format rather than by patient acuity and needs. The "grid" format does not look at how sick the patients are and how much time the nurse needs to give them the care that is needed. The "grid" only looks at "if you have twenty patients on the floor you get "x" number of nurses. This is often at the expense of patient care. Staffing decisions are often made by those not involved in direct patient care or by a manager who is not even in the building.

Some patients are stable, some are not - the amount of nursing staff, including nursing aides, needs to reflect this. Taking care of a thirty year old ambulatory patient is very different than taking care of a seventy-five year old patient with multiple medical, skin and mental status problems.

We fill out unsafe staffing reports when, in our professional judgment, we cannot give the patient's the care that they not only deserve BUT NEED. I feel those forms are not taken seriously or ignored - even when harm comes to a patient. All nurses want to keep their patients safe - safe from falls, skin breakdown and a worsening of their condition. This is impossible when adequate staffing is not provided.

The hospitals with the best outcomes will have the best staffing levels; this is written in the nursing journals. If these levels are reported, hospitals will adapt how they make the decision to staff a unit, making it possible to give the care the patients need.

Please vote to support SB 968.

Thank you,

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