



**TESTIMONY OF**

**DALE DANOWSKI, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND  
CHIEF NURSING OFFICER, ST. VINCENT'S MEDICAL CENTER,  
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT**

**SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2014**

***HB 5384, An Act Concerning Reports Of Nurse Staffing Levels***

My name is Dale Danowski, and I serve as Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I am a nurse and have been a nurse for 33 years.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony concerning HB 5384, An Act Concerning Reports Of Nurse Staffing Levels.

This bill would require hospitals to submit to the Department of Public Health annual reports on prospective nurse staffing plans and quarterly reports of actual daily nurse staffing levels by numerical staff-to-patient ratios for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses' aides as defined in Section 20-102aa of the Connecticut General Statutes. The bill also requires hospitals to report the method used to determine and adjust direct patient care staffing levels. St. Vincent's Medical Center opposes HB 5384 because it would impose an unnecessary administrative burden on our hospital. We believe it will have a negative impact on our ability to serve patients in an effective and efficient manner.

In 2013, St. Vincent's was named the only hospital in Fairfield County and one of only three hospitals in Connecticut to achieve Magnet® recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program® is the highest national honor for nursing excellence, the gold standard for nursing practice, and recognizes healthcare organizations that demonstrate excellence in nursing services, professionalism, teamwork and superiority in patient care.

With this achievement, St. Vincent's Medical Center joins a select group of 395 healthcare organizations out of nearly 6,000 in the country.

It is evident by this recognition that St. Vincent's places a strong emphasis on patient care needs, licensure and educational preparation of our nursing staff and the overall discipline of nursing.

To achieve Magnet recognition, St. Vincent's underwent a rigorous multiyear application process that demanded widespread participation from leadership and staff. The Magnet Recognition Program focuses on advancing three goals: promoting quality of care, identifying excellence in the delivery of nursing services to patients, and disseminating nursing care best practices. Magnet recognition has been shown to provide specific benefits to hospitals and their communities, such as improved patient care, safety and satisfaction.

The ANCC Magnet recognition is another demonstration of how St. Vincent's has transformed its practices to create a culture of high reliability regarding the safety of patients and staff.

We believe we have demonstrated our ability to manage our staffing in the most efficient, effective way and that includes having flexibility in staffing due to continuously assessing patient care needs, and being sensitive to the fact that multiple factors require us to use our own experience and judgment regarding our staffing decisions. The continual assessment and readjustment process is based on patient acuity and care needs, thus a snapshot of ratios in a defined shift is an inaccurate reflection of nurse staffing.

Quarterly reporting of numbers and ratios cannot provide an accurate reflection of actual staffing levels. Staffing is complex and dynamic, and we oppose adding an additional burden to an organization that has demonstrated it is performing to the highest standard of nursing care.

I urge you not to support HB 5384. Thank you for consideration of our position.