



377 Research Parkway 2D  
Meriden, CT 06450  
203-238-1207  
FAX (203) 238-3437  
www.ctnurses.org

Testimony **SB No. 278 Raised An Act Concerning Nursing**

**Home facility Staffing Levels**

**Human Services Committee**

**March 3, 2016**

Good Afternoon, Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombi and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee

I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association. I speak in support of **SB No. 278 Raised An Act Concerning Nursing Home facility Staffing Levels**

The present requirements for nursing home staffing were established when the acuity level and number of co-morbidities of residents was less and the care needs very different. Through additional home care programs and more care being delivered either in the home or assisted living facilities, the resident of long term care facilities is sicker, presents with multiple co morbidities, requires more complex care and is more dependent. Connecticut's regulations in this area have not kept up and resident

classification systems developed through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and others have offered methodologies to determine the number, experience and qualifications of nursing personnel needed to meet the resident's needs. Connecticut's regulations have been determined staffing by a static number of licensed and unlicensed nursing personnel.

Although we are supportive of this bill we have concerns related to professional nurse staffing in long-term care facilities. The projected staffing mix should include a sufficient number of registered nurses (RNs). The RN is ultimately responsible for all care that is delivered – including the assessments, changes in care plans (including receiving any verbal order with changes), licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants and now feeding assistants. A balance in staffing mix is essential to the provision of safe care, quality care. Just adding additional unlicensed personnel to the staffing equation and even adding additional licensed practical nurses will not reduce the responsibilities of the registered nurse. We urge the committee to have assurance that nurse staffing is not just a greater number of less qualified individuals.

I have included recommendations from the American Nurses Association that address recommended staffing level. I have also attached the full report for your review.

## Statement Endorsed by ANA 11/12/2014

The American Nurses Association, CGNO proposes that the following minimum staffing levels be adopted, funded, implemented, and publicly reported for nursing homes:

- A registered nurse be present in the nursing home at all times for oversight of resident care, resident assessment, supervision of licensed nursing staff and delegation to certified nursing assistants.
- The Director of Nursing be either prepared at the baccalaureate level or certified in nursing administration by one of the CGNO associations.
- The hours of direct nursing care for each resident be at least 4.1 hours per resident day with minimum 30% of that consisting of licensed nurses.
- Administrative RN positions such as the Director of Nursing and Assistant Director of Nursing not be counted as direct nursing hours for resident care.
- Skilled nursing facility residents have licensed staffing based on clinical acuity, which may necessitate more than the 4.1 hours per resident minimum.

Enhancing staffing does not mean just adding a greater number of less qualified individuals, it is important that proposed staffing ratios are take into consideration the complex multisystem failure patients during a 24 hours in which safe, quality care should be provided for the vulnerable elderly. Thank you for considering supporting, we hope you will consider our concerns when moving this legislation forward. We urge you support of **SB No. 278 Raised An Act Concerning Nursing Home facility Staffing Levels.** Thank you

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN, Chair, Government Relation, Connecticut Nurses Association, Professor Emeritus Central Connecticut State University

