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The Honorable Members of the Nevada State Legislature
Nevada State Legislature
7230 Amigo St. Las Vegas, NV 89119

Dear Honorable Chairman and Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the critical need for mandated nurse-to-patient ratios in Nevada. As a new graduate nurse and previous nurse apprentice, and as someone deeply invested in the well-being of our healthcare system, I am deeply concerned about the unsustainable workload faced by nurses in Nevada. I have personally witnessed the stress etched on nurses' faces and the frustration they endure daily. It's heartbreaking to see these dedicated professionals belittled and overwhelmed by impossible workloads. Nurses understand the importance of face-to-face time with patients, but excessive ratios rob them of this crucial aspect of care.

The current situation in our hospitals has reached a critical point, where nurses are consistently assigned more patients than they can safely manage. This practice not only jeopardizes patient safety but also places an undue burden on nurses who have invested years of education and training to obtain their licenses. Nurses work long hours and make significant sacrifices to provide quality care, yet they are often forced into unsafe staffing situations without adequate support from hospital administrations.

Many nurses are afraid to turn down these assignments because their jobs are threatened or they may be accused of patient neglect, which can put their licenses at risk. This fear further exacerbates the problem, as nurses feel pressured to accept unsustainable workloads. The quality of care inevitably suffers when nurses are overwhelmed, leading to increased medical errors and decreased patient satisfaction.

Furthermore, the lack of safe staffing ratios results in nurses being unable to take proper breaks, eat meals, or even process their assignments adequately. This unsustainable environment leads to burnout, poor mental health, and a lack of work-life balance, causing many nurses to leave the profession. The need for patient-to-nurse ratio legislation is at its most urgent now more than ever, as it is crucial for maintaining the longevity of our nursing workforce and ensuring better health outcomes.

It's important to note that several states have already successfully implemented nurse-to-patient ratio laws, demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of such legislation:

1. California has been a pioneer since 2004, mandating comprehensive ratios across all hospital units. For instance, they require a 1:2 ratio in critical care units and labor and

delivery, 1:4 in emergency departments, and 1:5 in medical/surgical units. These measures have been associated with lower mortality rates and improved nurse retention.

2. Massachusetts enacted a law in 2014 specifically for intensive care units (ICUs), requiring a 1:1 or 1:2 nurse-to-patient ratio based on patient acuity.
3. Oregon has recently adopted new regulations, set to take effect in June 2024, mandating a 1:2 ratio in ICUs and a 1:5 ratio in medical-surgical units. Their law also addresses the importance of staff breaks and imposes fines for violations.

These states serve as successful models for how nurse-to-patient ratio laws can be implemented, potentially improving both patient outcomes and nurse job satisfaction. Their experiences can provide valuable insights as Nevada considers similar legislation.

Implementing mandated nurse-to-patient ratios would not only enhance patient safety and improve the quality of care but also protect nurses from burnout and improve job satisfaction. It would reduce medical errors, improve patient outcomes, and maintain a stable and experienced nursing workforce.

I urge you to support legislation that mandates safe nurse-to-patient ratios in Nevada. Our nurses, patients, and communities are counting on your leadership to address this critical issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Meilani Martinez

New Graduate Nurse

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