



## Why New Mexico Should Not Mandate Staffing Ratios

Hospitals, nurse leaders and nurses all agree that patient safety is critical to all that we do. New Mexico hospitals and nurse leaders are committed to safe staffing for our patients. New Mexico hospitals and nurse leaders support the right patient care, at the right place and at the right time. We believe that it takes a team of caregivers to care for patients, and we recognize the critical role of the Registered Nurse on that team.

1. The number of patients a nurse should care for at any one time must be based on the acuity of the patient, the education and experience of each nurse, the geography of the specific unit, and the team members available to care for a patient's needs.
2. The clinical judgment of an experienced care team can never be replaced by a number.
3. The demand for care and patient needs change constantly and adjustments must be made to ensure needs are met.
4. With New Mexico health care reform initiatives to improve access, provide affordable health care coverage, reduce the uninsured and provide for adequate care delivery payments and reimbursement being rolled out, it is just not the right time to add costly mandates.

\* New Mexico Organization of Nurse Executives (NMONE) and the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence (NMCNE) along with New Mexico Nurses Association and the New Mexico Hospital Association developed a white paper around staffing guidelines in 2006 and updated it in 2008: [Voluntary Consensus Guidelines](#). The document can be found on the website of the two organizations. This document uses as its foundation the American Nurses Association's [Principles of Safe Staffing](#), developed as a guide to reducing fatigue and stress in healthcare workers. The guidelines have been used by several hospitals as starting points for developing their staffing plans and NMONE is working with others to have more wide-spread utilization of the guidelines across the state. Hospitals are developing staff-nurse included staffing committees. The profession and hospitals are not just standing back and reacting to nurses' complaints, but have been working on staffing, fatigue and other workplace issues for the past 3 years.

Reference:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2008/03/24/story5.html?b=1206331200^1608881&page=1>

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