

My name is Frank Kartheiser. I am the Lead Organizer for Worcester Interfaith and Co-Chair of the Worcester Community Labor Coalition. I am also someone who has been a patient in the hospital and the relative of a patient in the hospital. All of us at one time or another will either be a patient ourselves or have a loved one in the hospital. In some of these cases, the care will be so critical that the patient will be in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). I am pleased that the state has set a limit on the number of patients a nurse can care for at one time in an ICU. And I think it is very important that patients and their family members are aware of their rights under this law- and that the public is informed as to how each hospital is complying with the law.

For the average person, the hospitalization of a loved one is a stressful time. There is a lot of information to process. In the midst of this, family members should know that their loved one is entitled to one-to-one care in the ICU, except in certain circumstances. This information should be posted in each hospital in a prominent location, such as the family waiting area and in the ICU itself, so that family members and patients can know of their right to safe care. This information should also be included in any information provided at the time of admission. And in any instance where there is a disagreement about whether a patient's condition necessitates a one nurse to one patient assignment and the patient is assigned as a second patient to one nurse, the family members should be notified of the disagreement and decision, so that they may ask any necessary questions about this aspect of care and push back, as necessary.

Additionally, any reporting on compliance with this law and what is actually happening in our hospital ICUs should be made available to the public in a timely manner in an accessible format. I should be able to easily find out if the hospital treating my loved one is complying with this law.

The more information that patients and their families have, the better they will be able to advocate for themselves and their loved ones.