

Dr. Stuart Altman, Chair
Massachusetts Health Policy Commission
50 Milk Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

April 13, 2015

Dear Chairman Altman:

My name is Paul Drake. I am the director of Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice. While I am not a nurse, I have been a patient as well as a service provider in clinical and educational settings, and it is from those perspectives that I wish to address you. When you or a family member is in an intensive care unit, there are many concerns and worries running through your mind. Thankfully, because of this law, one of those worries has been eliminated. As a patient, you now know that you will be cared for by a nurse, one nurse, during your time in the ICU. That is, so long as the regulations that this board creates uphold the intent of this law. Patients have enough to be concerned with as it is, they should have the peace of mind of knowing they will be cared for by one nurse while they are in such a vulnerable state.

Along these same lines, I would encourage you to change the requirement for reporting violations of the law so that violations are reported immediately. It is very important that if a hospital is breaking the law that the public knows about it and knows about it right away.

Finally, on the subject of the public being informed, it is important that the people of Massachusetts know that this new law exists and is in place. I would encourage you to explicitly include in your regulations that hospitals be required to post information for patients about their rights. Every patient should be made aware of the fact that they are entitled to one to one care in an ICU and that there are no circumstances when they should be cared for by a nurse with two patients. The public being aware of this law is vital to its enforcement, as it will allow patients to be able to advocate for themselves and their loved ones.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this board.

Sincerely,

Paul Drake
Executive Director
Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice