

MetroBTC

Building & Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District

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Health Policy Commission October 16 & 17, 2018 Yes on Question 1

The Building & Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District writes in support of Question 1 because it will dramatically improve patient safety in Massachusetts' hospitals by setting a safe maximum limit on the number of patients assigned to a nurse at one time, while providing flexibility to adjust nurses' patient assignments based on specific patient needs.

The Building & Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District represents 35,000 working families in the Metropolitan Boston region. We work in partnership with more than 3,300 union contractors, providing the highest standards for workers in the construction industry. Paramount to the success of this work is safety and high standards. Safety for those on the construction site and safety and high standards for the end users of the construction project. To that end we strongly support Question 1 because it means patient safety.

When nurses are spread too thin, care suffers and bad things can happen. Today in Massachusetts' hospitals, there is no law and no limit to the number of patients that can be assigned to a nurse at one time (aside from the Intensive Care Unit). Because of this, patient care is deteriorating and leading to more complications, preventable readmissions, and medical errors, as well as longer hospital stays and real life-threatening risks. Nurses are telling us it is impacting care:

- 77 percent report being forced to care for too many patients at one time.
- 90 percent say the quality of patient care in Massachusetts's hospitals is suffering due to excessive patient loads.
- 64 percent report that patients are harmed as a result of the compromised care from unsafe patient limits.

Dozens of independent scientific studies have consistently found that the quality of care decreases dramatically when nurses are forced to care for too many patients at once, putting patients at increased risk for complications like pneumonia, bedsores, infections and more. Question 1 is an important patient safety measure.

Front-line, bedside nurses are telling us something needs to change to improve the quality and safety of care. We need to listen to them. Question 1 is supported by a broad coalition from across Massachusetts, including registered nurses, patients and family members, health and safety organizations, community groups, unions and elected officials.

Safe patient limits ensure better patient outcomes, lower healthcare costs and higher quality of care.

Sincerely and appreciatively,



Brian Doherty