



# *International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 223*

*475 Myles Standish Blvd. Taunton, MA 02780*

*Tel. (508) 880-2690 Fax (508) 880-2694 Web: [www.ibew223.org](http://www.ibew223.org)*

*Servicing Southeastern Massachusetts for Over 100 Years*

October 16, 2018

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

IBEW Local Union 223 is supporting 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. 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 say patient care is being compromised when they have too many patients. 77% of RNs report that they are assigned too many patients to care for at one time. 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.

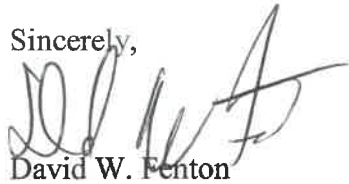
Evidence-based, peer-reviewed studies published in respected medical journals such as the *Journal of Institute of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine* have all published studies on the impact of the nurses' patient assignments impacting the quality of care.

Massachusetts is well-positioned to have safe patient limits. Hospitals can afford to invest in better patient care. This is a \$28 billion hospital industry that recorded \$7.6 billion in profits in the last 5 years. And Massachusetts has more nurses (per capita) than nearly every state in the nation. We are one of just two states with no nursing shortage and a projected surplus through 2030.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. W. Fenton', written over the printed name.

David W. Fenton  
Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary