



Francis X. Callahan, Jr.  
President

Jeff Sullivan,  
Vice President

Louis A. Mandarini, Jr.,  
Secretary-Treasurer



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

October 15, 2018

The Massachusetts Building Trades Council (MBTC) writes in strong support of Question 1 to improve patient care in Massachusetts hospitals. The MBTC is a 98-year-old organization dedicated to helping working people improve their quality of life. We are comprised of 74 member locals representing over 75,000 working men and women across the state. Our multi-employer health insurance plans spend well over \$1 Billion per year to provide quality health care coverage to over 240,000 members, spouses and dependents.

We support 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.

Critical to the success of our work in the building and construction industry is having a highly trained and skilled workforce, high standards, and strong safety measures in place. 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 safety measure to our members and all patients.

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.

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.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Francis X. Callahan, Jr." in a cursive script.

Francis X. Callahan, Jr.  
President