

This is the section of the 35-page Pennsylvania House Bill No. 106 that sets the minimum required patient-to-nurse ratios

Unit or patient care areas. The minimum staffing ratios for general, acute, critical access and specialty hospitals are established in this subsection for direct care registered nurses as follows:

(1) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in an **intensive care unit** shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(2) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for a **critical care unit** shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(3) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for a **neonatal intensive care unit** shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(4) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for a **burn unit** shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(5) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for a step-down, **intermediate care unit** shall be 1:3 or fewer at all times.

(6) An **operating room** shall have at least one direct care registered nurse assigned to the duties of the circulating registered nurse and a minimum of one additional person as a scrub assistant for each patient-occupied operating room.

(7) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in the **postanesthesia recovery unit** of an anesthesia service shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times, regardless of the type of anesthesia the patient received.

(8) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **patients receiving conscious sedation** shall be 1:1 at all times.

(9) (i) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for an **emergency department** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(ii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **critical care patients** in the emergency department shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(iii) Only direct care registered nurses shall be assigned to **critical trauma patients** in the emergency department, and a minimum direct care registered nurse to-critical trauma patient ratio of 1:1 shall be maintained at all times.

(iv) In an emergency department, triage, radio or specialty/flight, registered nurses do not count in the calculation of direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio.

(10) (i) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in the **labor and delivery suite** of prenatal services shall be 1:1 at all times for active labor patients and patients with medical or obstetrical complications.

(ii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio shall be 1:1 at all times for **initiating epidural anesthesia and circulation for cesarean delivery**. (iii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for patients in **immediate postpartum** shall be 1:2 or fewer at all times.

(11) (i) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **antepartum patients** who are not in active labor shall be 1:3 or fewer at all times.

(ii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for patients in a **postpartum area of the prenatal service** shall be 1:3 mother-baby couplets or fewer at all times.

(iii) In the event of **cesarean delivery**, the total number of mothers plus infants assigned to a single direct care registered nurse shall never exceed four.

(iv) In the event of **multiple births**, the total number of mothers plus infants assigned to a single direct care registered nurse shall not exceed six.

(v) For **postpartum areas in which the direct care registered nurse's assignment consists of mothers only**, the direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(vi) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **postpartum women or postsurgical gynecological patients** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(vii) **Well baby nursery direct care** registered nurse-to-patient ratio shall be 1:5 or fewer at all times.

(viii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **unstable newborns and those in the resuscitation period** as assessed by the direct care registered nurse shall be 1:1 at all times.

(ix) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **recently born infants** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(12) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio for **pediatrics** shall be 1:3 or fewer at all times.

(13) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in **telemetry** shall be 1:3 or fewer at all times.

(14) (i) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in **medical/surgical** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(ii) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratios for **presurgical and admissions units** or ambulatory surgical units shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(15) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in **other specialty units** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(16) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in **psychiatric units** shall be 1:4 or fewer at all times.

(17) The direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratio in a **rehabilitation unit or a skilled nursing facility** shall be 1:5 or fewer at all times.

(c) Additional conditions.--

(1) Identifying a unit or clinical patient care area by a name or term other than those defined in section 833-A does not affect the requirement to staff at the direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratios identified for the level of intensity or type of care described in section 833-A and this section.

(2) (i) Patients shall only be cared for on units or clinical patient care areas where the level of intensity, type of care and direct care registered nurse-to-patients ratios meet the individual requirements and needs of each patient.

(ii) The use of patient acuity-adjustable units or clinical patient care areas is prohibited. Units must be staffed at the direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratios for the highest acuity patient as identified for the level and intensity or type of care provided under this section and section 833-A.

(3) **Video cameras, monitors or any form of electronic visualization** of a patient shall not be deemed a substitute for the direct observation required for patient assessment by the direct care registered nurse and for patient protection required by an attendant or sitter.

Section 841-A. Hospital unit staffing plans.

(a) Patient classification and acuity tool.--

(1) In addition to the direct care registered nurse ratio requirements of subsection (b), a hospital shall assign additional nursing staff, such as licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants and ancillary staff, through the implementation of a valid patient classification and acuity tool for determining nursing care needs of individual patients that reflects the

assessment made by the assigned direct care registered nurse of patient nursing care requirements and provides for shift-by-shift staffing based on those requirements.

(2) The ratios specified in subsection (b) shall constitute the minimum number of registered nurses who shall be assigned to direct patient care. Additional registered nursing staff in excess of the prescribed ratios shall be assigned to direct patient care in accordance with the hospital's implementation of a valid system for determining nursing care requirements.