



California State Senate

A message from your
colleagues in California about

The Patient Safety Act...

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California State Senate

SENATOR
SHEILA JAMES KUEHL
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT
CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH



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JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES

June 17, 2008

Massachusetts State Senate
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Members of the Massachusetts State Senate:

I was the author of Assembly Bill 394 that established nurse to patient ratios in California's acute care hospitals, and I am proud to have successfully carried this critical patient safety legislation. I was pleased to see the establishment of California's historic law requiring minimum nurse staffing levels in our state's hospitals, and I understand that a very similar bill – The Patient Safety Act – has passed the Massachusetts House and is now pending in the State Senate.

Before AB 394 became law, California's patients and communities were at risk. I felt strongly that urgent action was needed. I knew that the most effective way to assure safe and high quality hospital care was to assist our dedicated registered nurses in their mission to protect patients. The policy of my bill has been a demonstrable success. There are over 80,000 more RNs licensed in California; hospitals have been able to staff in accordance with requirements, a fact supported by our State Department of Public Health. I frequently hear from families and patients that they are convinced that the increase in RN staffing in acute care hospitals is protecting them. Of course, I have also heard reports from RNs about ways in which the law has improved patient care from their bedside perspective.

The law brought nurses back where they belong – at the patient's bedside. This has translated into significantly better care, lower staff turnover, and improved outcomes for patients. None of the dire predictions made by some hospital officials has happened. Patients everywhere deserve the same security of knowing that, when they are at their most vulnerable, in a hospital bed, they too will receive the best possible care. Establishing safe patient staffing ratios for nursing care protects patients.

I am proud of our historic vote in California that gave nurses the tools they needed to provide the highest quality care while being the patient's advocate. I am writing to encourage my colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature to do the same for your patients. I am confident that you, too, will be proud that you had a part in improving patient care in your state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Kuehl".

Sheila James Kuehl, Chair
Senate Health Committee



California State Senate

June 17, 2008

Massachusetts State Senate
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Members of the Massachusetts State Senate:

As current or former California lawmakers, we are proud to have voted for and continue to enthusiastically support California's historic law requiring minimum nurse staffing levels in our state's hospitals. We understand that a very similar bill – The Patient Safety Act – has passed the Massachusetts House and is now pending in the Senate.

When we saw our patients, and our communities at risk, we felt strongly that urgent action was needed. We felt, and continue to feel, that the most effective solution possible to assure safe, high quality hospital care was to assist our dedicated registered nurses in their mission to protect patients.

The results have proven we were right.

Our law has been a spectacular success. **The law brought nurses back where they belong – at the patient's bedside, which means significantly better care, lower staff turnover and improved outcomes for patients.** None of the dire predictions made by some hospital officials have come to pass.

Patients everywhere deserve the same security of knowing that when they are at their most vulnerable, in a hospital bed, they too will receive the best possible care, with safe patient limits for safe nursing care.

We are proud of our historic vote in California that gives nurses the tools they need to provide the highest quality care. We are writing to encourage our colleagues in the Massachusetts legislature to do the same for your patients. We are confident that you too will be proud that you did.

Sincerely,



Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D), Oakland



Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero (D), Los Angeles



Senator John Burton (D), San Francisco (Retired)



Senator Gilbert Cedillo (D), Los Angeles



Senator Ellen Corbett (D), San Leandro



Senator Dean Florez (D), Shafter



Senator Carol Migden (D), San Francisco



Senator Darrell Steinberg (D), Sacramento



Senator Tom Torlakson (D), Antioch



Senator Pat Wiggins (D), Santa Rosa

The Coalition to
Protect Massachusetts Patients

Supporting The Patient Safety Act — Safe RN Staffing for Safe Patient Care



HB 4783 is sponsored by Rep. Christine Canavan and Sen. Marc Pacheco

For more information please visit www.massnurses.org or call Andi Mullin, MNA Director of Legislation and Government Affairs at 781.830.5716

