

# Making the Case for Staffing Ratios

**“If the average patient-to-nurse ratios in those [Pennsylvania] hospitals had been equivalent to the average ratio across the California hospitals, we get 10.6 percent (264) fewer surgical deaths in Pennsylvania.”**

LINDA AIKEN, et. al. study of the impact of California’s staffing ratios legislation on patient safety.

**“In our most recent contract, AGH RNs were able to win major safe staffing protections, pay improvements, and a meaningful voice in the way our care is delivered. Through our negotiations, we are able to make sure our management invests in nurses and in quality care.”**

DIANE LATAILLE, RN

## Research Backs the Value of Ratios:

Plenty of research has been published that shows improved nurse staffing leads to better patient outcomes. For instance, in 2006, UCLA Professor Jack Needleman and his colleagues estimated that **nationally, “6,700 in-hospital patient deaths could be avoided by raising nurse staffing.”** Needleman, Baurhaus, et. al., Health Affairs, “Nurse Staffing in Hospitals: Is There a Business Case for Quality?” Jan/Feb 2006.

The most recent study, published just this past April, by the University of Pennsylvania’s Linda Aiken and her research colleagues concluded that if Pennsylvania hospitals had average nurse-to-patient ratios equivalent to those in California—where minimum ratios are set by law—we would have **10.6% fewer surgical deaths in the state.** Aiken, Sloane, et. al. Health Services Research, “Implications of the California Nurse Staffing Mandate for Other States,” April 2010

## Other SEIU Healthcare PA RNs have already won staffing ratios:

Working together to set safe RN-to-patient ratios in a union contract is not a radical idea. Allegheny General Hospital and Heritage Valley Beaver RNs have had a system of ratios in place for years now. **Our patients also deserve the best.**

## ARHS Nurses Join Call for Staffing Ratios Legislation in Harrisburg



Teresa Kozak, IV Team; Kim Heverly, T10; Kathy McConville, T14; and Jill Brantner, Quality Management meet with State Representative Jerry Stern to talk about HB 147.

On October 5th, ARHS nurses joined dozens of other RNs from across the state for a press conference and to speak with our Representatives in support of state-mandated staffing ratios in every acute-care hospital across the state.

The “Minimum RN to Patient Ratios with Acuity Standards for Acute Care Facilities” bill, House Bill 147, has been introduced in the Pennsylvania House and would require safe minimum standards (adjusted for acuity) while maintaining support staff on each unit.

# What ARHS Nurses Say about Staffing



**“The safety and care of our patients is every RN’s top priority. We need to fight for safe and adequate staffing ratios because our patients expect and deserve world-class care. Allegheny General Hospital and Heritage Valley Beaver RNs have won adequate staffing ratios in their contracts. ARHS RNs must demand the same. Our patients’ lives depend on us!”**

MATT McCAULLEY, RN

## CONTRACT SURVEY RESULTS

**75% of nurses said that staffing was their number 1 priority in contract negotiations this year.**

Over 75% of ARHS nurses said that there is not enough staff to get the work done on their departments.



Overall, 93% of ARHS nurses said that it was important to improve staffing in their unit or department.



Almost 88% of RNs say that nurse-to-patient ratios are “rarely” or “only sometimes” adequate for providing safe patient care.



Similarly, over 60% of nurses say that the hospital “hardly ever” or “never” places adequate value on patient acuity when determining how many patients a nurse will care for.



ARHS RNs have made it clear that our first priority in these negotiations will be to set safe nurse-to-patient ratios, adjusted for patient acuity, on every unit in this hospital. Committees of nurses from each unit have been working together to determine what is an appropriate approach for their area/unit of the hospital.

For the latest from contract negotiations and more, go to our website at:  
[www.ARHSnursesunited.org](http://www.ARHSnursesunited.org)

All members are invited to attend!  
Have a question or want more information?  
Contact your bargaining committee member or call  
Tommy Whitehouse at 814-933-6800.

**Beginning at 4:00 PM** Ramada Inn (on Plank Rd. in Altoona)

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14**

# Upcoming Negotiations



ARHS Nurses United  
c/o SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania  
1500 N. 2nd Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102



ARHS NURSES UNITED

**FOCUS ON**

# Quality Staffing

As nurses, we know that our hands and minds can only perform a certain number of tasks with quality in any given shift.

We know what mix of acuity we can handle in our patients but, far too often, we are expected to care for too many acutely ill patients.

We know that having more care at the bedside has been proven to improve patient care, reduce hospital stays, and save lives.

Because of what we know, we must speak together for safe, high quality care in our union contract and across our state by setting minimum safe RN-to-patient ratios, adjusted for acuity, in every department in our hospital and every hospital across our state.

[www.ARHSnursesunited.org](http://www.ARHSnursesunited.org)