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NEWS RELEASE



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ANA APPLAUDS INTRODUCTION OF REGISTERED NURSE SAFE STAFFING ACT
Legislation would improve patient care

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) commends the introduction of bipartisan federal legislation aimed at implementing staffing systems that ensure appropriate registered nurse staffing levels in health care facilities. The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act (HR 4138) was introduced November 9 in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Lois Capps (D-CA) and Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL).

“Safe staffing saves lives,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR. “This legislation is vital to protect patients and improve the working environment for nurses. ANA applauds these lawmakers for their commitment to improving the quality of patient care, and putting an end to unsafe staffing practices.”

The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act would require each hospital, in consultation with the nursing staff, to develop and implement a staffing system that ensures an appropriate number of registered nurses on each shift and in each unit of the hospital to assure appropriate patient care. Most importantly, this approach recognizes nurses as professionals and empowers them with the appropriate decision-making role in the care they provide.

“For the sake of our patients and our nurses we have to do a better job of ensuring that there are enough nurses present to provide quality care,” said Rep. Lois Capps, a nurse and member of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee. We all want to see the best possible care for patients and staffing practices **MORE. . .**

that promote a safe and healthy work environment. This legislation encourages nurses and hospitals to work together to make sure the right number of nurses are there to provide the excellent care that each and every patient deserves.”

“This legislation is all about patient safety and hospital accountability,” remarked Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite. “Americans are demanding action on health and safety issues related to their medical care. Ensuring a proper number of nurses are on staff will help improve patient safety, health and satisfaction. H.R. 4138 is a great step in the right direction.”

A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine in May of 2002 found that higher levels of nursing care correlate with better patient care and outcomes in hospitals. Another study in 2002 by the Joint Commission found that nearly one-quarter of all unanticipated events that result in death, injury or permanent loss of function result from inadequate nurse staffing levels. And research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) found that RN staffing levels have a significant effect on preventable hospital deaths among post-surgery patients.

For more information on Safe Staffing, and ANA efforts to enact safe staffing legislation, please visit <http://www.anapoliticalpower.org>

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.