



## Standing up for Rhode Island patients means fighting for safer hospitals. It's time to pass the Patient Safety Act

In 2007, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation banning mandatory overtime in hospitals. This dangerous and costly practice dramatically impacted the quality of patient care, and the UNAP was proud to work with legislators to bring it to an end.

Today, there remains a crisis in health care -- Rhode Island nurses are being forced to treat too many patients at one time -- and once again, it's impacting bedside care. That's why we're working with legislators to pass The Patient Safety Act of 2015, sponsored by Rep. Raymond Gallison (**H5506 & S326**) and Sen. Joshua Miller, respectively, to set safe and responsible limits to the number of patients under a nurse's care at one time.

### Five things legislators need to know about the Patient Safety Act:



#### When nurses are pushed beyond the limit -- patients feel the impact

Each year, nurses file hundreds of formal complaints with hospital administrators relative to safe staffing levels, but those complaints go largely ignored. Some nurses are being forced to treat as many as eight patients at one time -- and patients are suffering the consequences in the form of avoidable complications, increased length of stay and costly readmissions.



#### The Patient Safety Act will protect patients & improve quality of care

Under Rep. Gallison (H5506) and Sen. Miller's legislation (S326), the appropriate nurse / patient ratio would be determined by care unit. A 2011 New England Journal of Medicine study found that when nurses are assigned to too many patients at one time, the risk of patient death increases two percent per shift.



#### Safe RN staffing reduces costs

Investing in more adequate nurse staffing levels means patients are better prepared for discharge -- dramatically reducing post-discharge utilization costs and the need for readmission.



#### There is a strong and consistent link between nurse staffing levels and patient outcomes

Improved RN staffing reduces rates of hospital-acquired infections, pneumonia, shock, cardiac arrest, gastrointestinal bleeding and other adverse outcomes.



#### Nurses save lives everyday

Nurses are specially trained to monitor a patient's condition from minute-to-minute and take immediate actions to prevent complications or to save a life. Setting safe and responsible limits to the number of patients a nurse can simultaneously treat increases the amount of precious time and care that can be afforded to each patient.