MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

April 29, 2015

S.782 (Hannon)/A.6571 (Gottfried)

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the “safe staffing for quality care act.”

New York University College of Nursing (NYUCN) strongly opposes S.782 (Hannon)/A.6571 (Gottfried), which would require prescribed staffing ratios for hospitals and nursing homes throughout New York.

While NYUCN supports the intent of this proposed legislation, mandating staffing ratios does not address the shortage of healthcare workers in New York State, specifically of nurses, which is critical to delivering high quality patient care. Hospitals are experiencing an increased demand for nurses, and will continue to do so in the coming years. Imposing a stringent staffing requirement will force facilities to hire additional nurses; further exacerbating the workforce shortage; place additional burdens on hospital resources; and detract from patient-centered delivery models.

Additionally, establishing a fixed, statewide ratio would apply a one-size-fits-all approach to the staffing of individual hospitals and nursing homes across the state. Such an approach does not take into consideration individual patients’ needs, the expertise of the multidisciplinary team that interacts with patients, nor the ability and needs of the individual hospital or nursing home.

Sponsors of this legislation indicate that peer-reviewed research and evidence-based recommendations support the need for such ratios. However, improved patient outcomes can be achieved through other methods such as evidence-based practices to care and establishing set principles for nurse staffing.

NYUCN believes that through innovative partnerships with academia and hospitals, New York can address workforce shortages throughout the state. For the above reasons, the New York University College of Nursing opposes this legislation and urges the Legislature not to pass the bill.

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