

TO David Schildmeier, MNA
FROM Chris Anderson and Andrew Schwartz
DATE May 4, 2018
SUBJECT Key findings from a poll of MA registered nurses

This document reports the findings from an annual survey of Massachusetts registered nurses conducted since 2014. The 2018 survey was conducted April 2-25, 2018 and included telephone interviews with 302 RNs randomly selected from a statewide list of all licensed RNs. Most responding nurses are not MNA members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Massachusetts nurses report a growing number of barriers to delivering quality patient care. Over the past decade, RNs have seen hospital patients become sicker, and hospitals themselves become more corporate. RNs say the result is more decisions being made based on profit margin than on patient care.

The biggest challenge RNs report in delivering care is *not having enough time with each patient*. Over three-quarters say RNs in Massachusetts hospitals are assigned too many patients to care for at one time.

RNs report these challenges are leading to a sharp increase in negative outcomes for patients. Over three-quarters are aware of patient complications and medical errors because of unsafe patient assignments. Nearly as many are aware of longer hospital stays and re-admissions. Over one-third are aware of a death. Awareness of all these outcomes has increased by double digits over the past five years.

RNs do not find that hospitals executives are responsive to their concerns about patient loads and staffing levels. Six-in-ten nurses say management does not usually adjust patient assignments when they become unsafe based on number or acuity of patients.

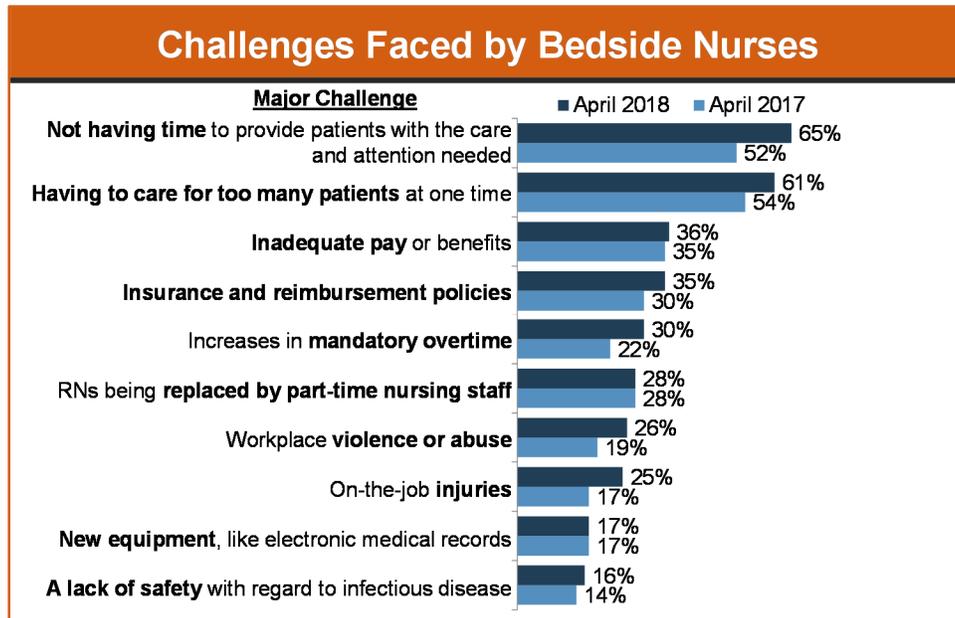
At the same time, nurses report workplace violence is becoming a more widespread problem. Nearly seven-in-ten nurses have experienced workplace violence within the past two years.

Against this backdrop, nearly nine-in-ten (86%) Massachusetts nurses say they plan to vote yes on the ballot question to limit the number of patients that can be assigned to a nurse at one time.

KEY FINDINGS

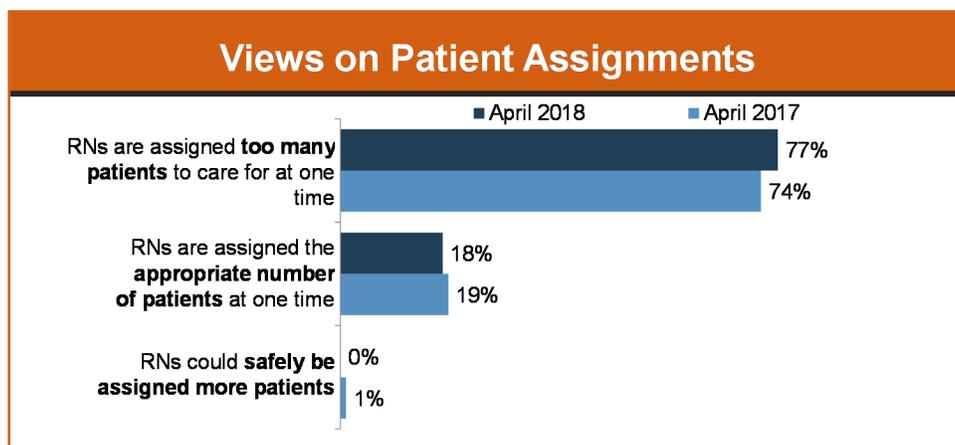
Challenges faced by bedside nurses

A lack of time to give patients needed care and attention and having to care for too many patients at one time are by far the most frequent challenges faced by bedside nurses. Two-thirds (65%) say that *not having enough time* is a major challenge, up from 52% last year. Similarly, six-in-ten (61%) say that *having to care for too many patients at once* is a major challenge, up from 54% in the previous year. No other challenges are nearly as widespread.



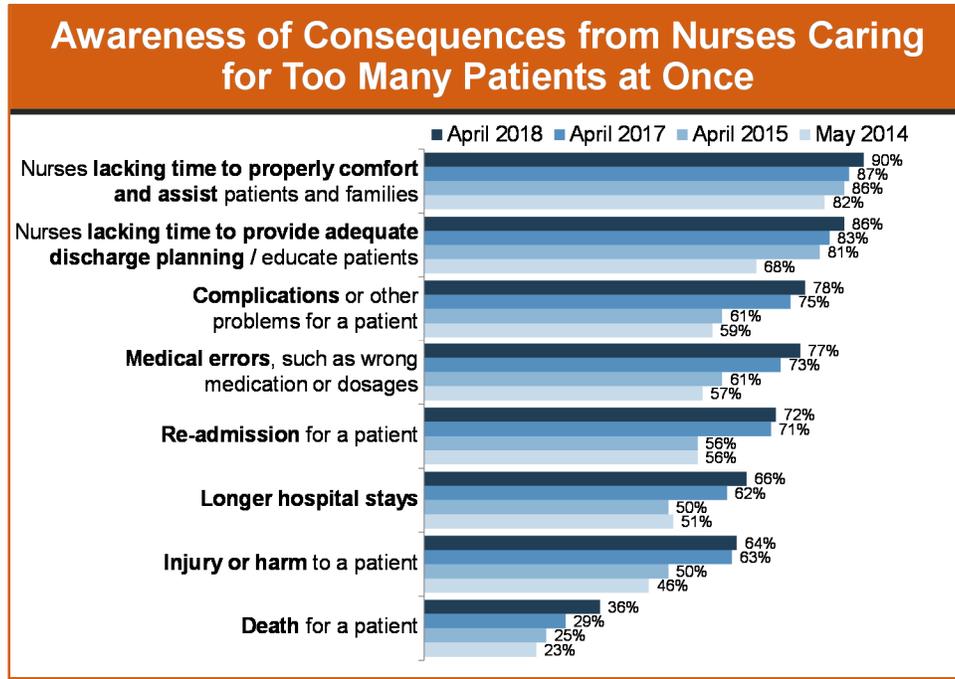
Patient assignments

Fully 77% of nurses think RNs in Massachusetts hospitals are assigned too many patients to care for at one time, while just 18% think patient assignments are appropriate.



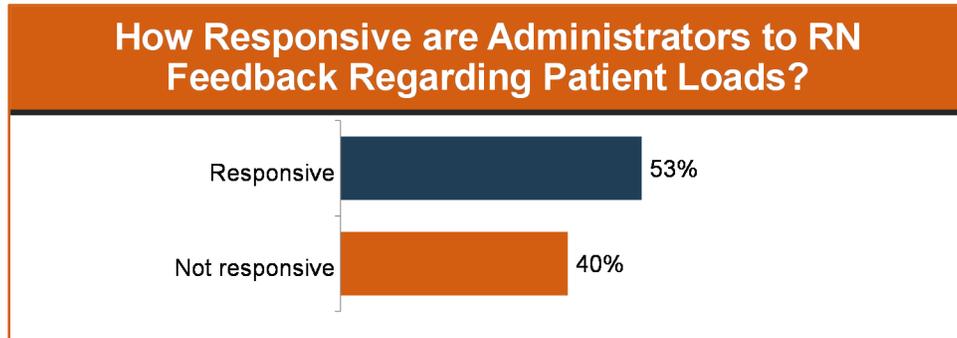
Consequences of unsafe assignments

Awareness and recognition of significant negative patient outcomes as a result of unsafe patient assignments is now widespread, and up significantly over the past five years.

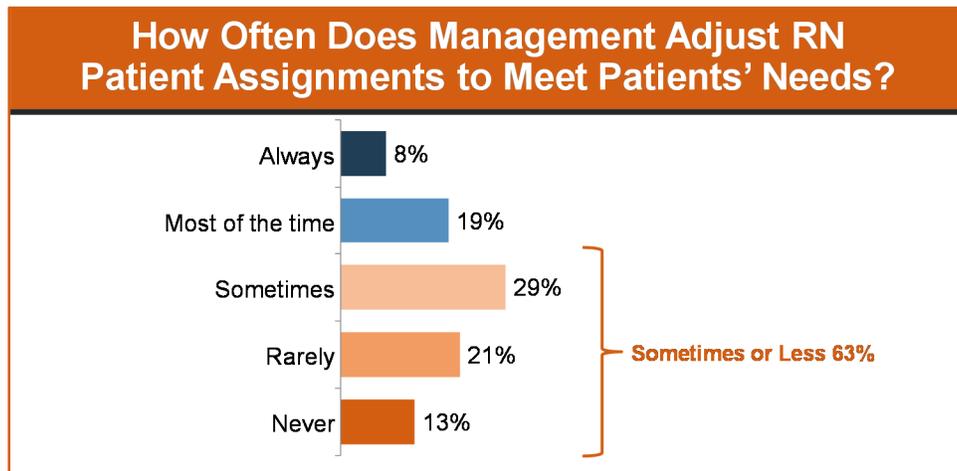


Hospital responsiveness

Four-in-ten (40%) nurses find that hospital administrators are not responsive to their feedback regarding patient loads and nurse staffing levels, and most of the time, management does not adjust patient assignments to meet patients' needs.

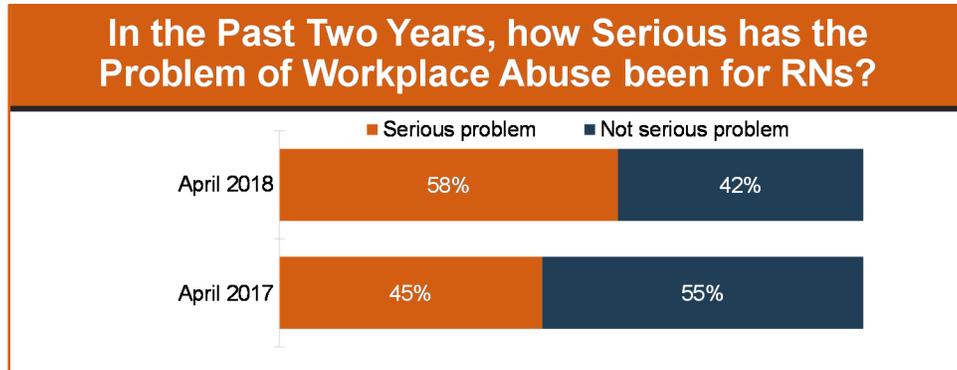


Over six-in-ten (63%) nurses find that hospital management only occasionally adjusts their patient assignments when it is needed to meet patients' needs.

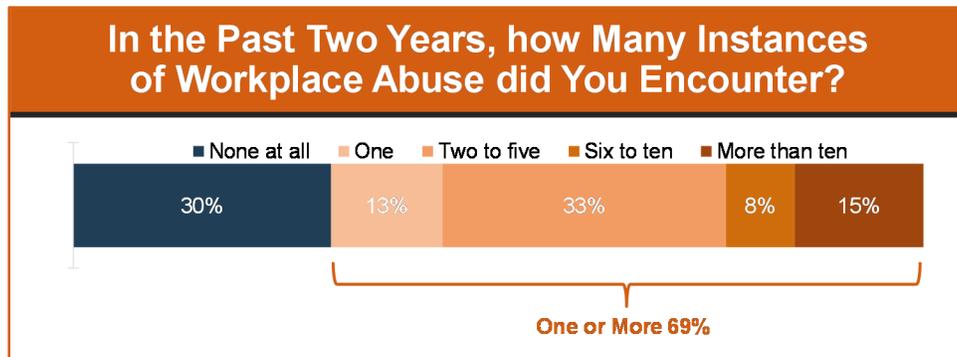


Workplace violence

Almost six-in-ten (58%) nurses now think that workplace violence is a serious problem; this is up 13-points from one year ago when 45% of nurses thought that this was a serious problem.

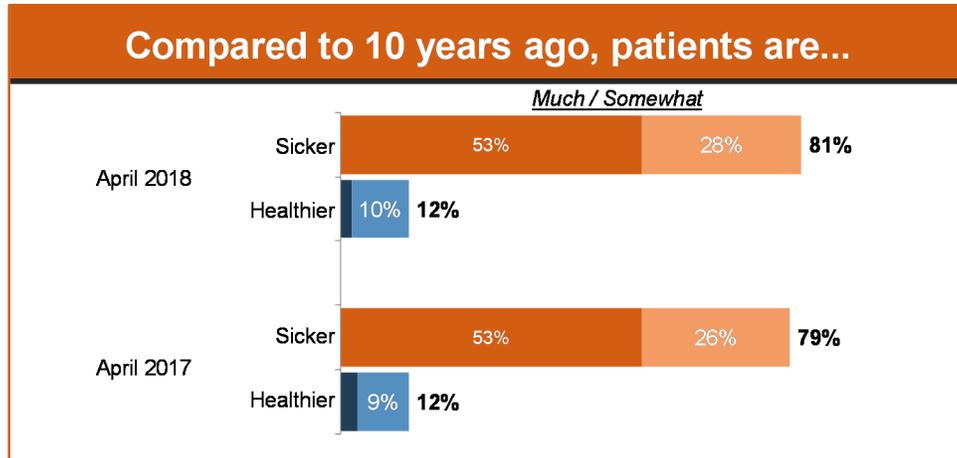


Fully seven-in-ten (69%) nurses report having experienced one or more instances of violence within the past two years.



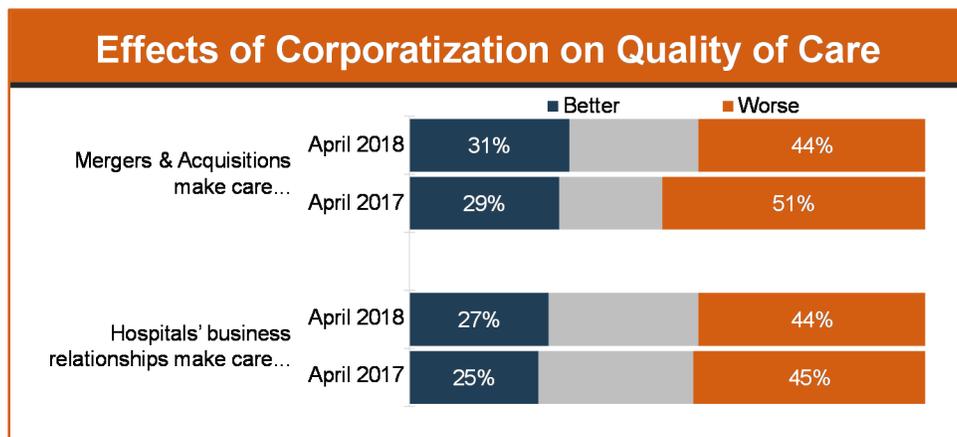
Hospital patients are sicker today

Eight-in-ten (81%) nurses say that hospital patients today are sicker than they were ten years ago, and over half (53%) say that patients are *much* sicker.



Corporatization

Most nurses do not believe that hospital's corporatization is having a positive effect on quality of care. In line with last year, less than a third (31%) of nurses think that Massachusetts hospitals' mergers and acquisitions have made the quality of care better. Similarly, just over a quarter (27%) believe that hospitals' business relationships with pharmaceutical companies and/or medical device makers actually make patient care better.



About the Survey

"The State of Nursing in Massachusetts" was commissioned by the Massachusetts Nurses Association and conducted April 2-25, 2018.

The survey utilized gold-standard interviewing practices as outlined by the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). Respondents were randomly selected from a complete file of the 100,000 nurses registered with the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing, and geographic quotas were used to ensure accurate representation across all regions of the state. Interviews were conducted on landlines and cellphones by trained, professional interviewers; the average length of a completed interview was 19 minutes.

Screening questions were used to verify that respondents were registered nurses working in Massachusetts healthcare facilities. Slight age and care setting (teaching hospital, community hospital, non-hospital care) weights were applied to ensure the data accurately matched demographic information available on the statewide list of nurses and the actual breakdown of healthcare facilities across the state.

A majority (54%) of RNs interviewed were not MNA members.

Anderson Robbins Research is a Boston-based firm specializing in providing highly accurate research to political and corporate clients. ARR President Chris Anderson has provided polling to a presidential campaign, numerous ballot initiative campaigns, local and state political candidates, leading health care organizations and is currently the Democratic pollster on a bipartisan team that conducts a regular national telephone poll of 1,000 voters on behalf of the Fox News Channel.

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