



Massachusetts
Nurses
Association

Legislative Agenda 2017-2018



An Act Requiring Health Care Employers to Develop and Implement Programs to Prevent Workplace Violence (SD 742/HD 1316)

Sponsors: Senator James Timilty/Representative Denise Garlick

Nurses are assaulted on the job more than police officers and prison guards, with more than 70% of hospital emergency department nurses reporting being assaulted during their career. This bill would require health care employers to perform an annual safety risk assessment and, based on those findings, develop and implement programs to minimize the danger of workplace violence to employees and patients. It would also provide time off for health care workers assaulted on the job to address legal issues and require semiannual reporting of assaults on health care employees.

An Act Providing for Safe Patient Handling (SD 968/HD 858)

Sponsors: Senator Harriette Chandler/Representative Claire Cronin

Nurses and other health care workers suffer more musculoskeletal injuries than any other profession, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This bill would require health care facilities to adopt and implement a safe patient handling program to identify, assess, and develop strategies to control risk of injury to patients and health care workers associated with the lifting, transferring, repositioning, or movement of a patient or equipment.

The Hospital Profit Transparency and Fairness Act (SD 42/HD 433)

Sponsors: Senator Michael Moore/Representative Josh Cutler

When health care corporations, which receive a substantial amount of their funding from taxpayer dollars, are closing hospitals, pediatric units, detox units and psychiatric units, the public has the right to know if tax dollars are being spent on patient safety or hospital CEOs. This bill would require hospitals to be transparent about their financial holdings and other activities, assess any hospital receiving taxpayer dollars that has an annual operating margin above a specific, predetermined cap and assess any hospital receiving taxpayer dollars that provides a compensation package for its CEO that is greater than 100 times that of the hospital's lowest paid employee. These assessments would be deposited in a newly created Medicaid Reimbursement Enhancement Fund to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to eligible hospitals to limit excessive CEO salaries and to limit and claw back excess profits to ensure that taxpayer dollars are dedicated exclusively to safe patient care and necessary services for all communities in the Commonwealth.

An Act Relative to the Closing of Hospital Essential Services (SD 504/HD 728)

Sponsors: Senator Jennifer Flanagan/Representative Ed Copping

In the wake of the recent illegal and premature closings of North Adams Regional Hospital and Quincy Medical Center, along with the loss of other essential services throughout the state, this bill would extend the official notice period to the Department of Public Health (DPH) in advance of a closure or discontinuation of health services and require any hospital proposing closure or discontinuation of health services to provide evidence of having notified and provided the opportunity for comment from affected municipalities before the notification period begins. The bill would also instruct the Attorney General to seek an injunction against to maintain the essential services for the duration of the notice period and would prohibit the hospital from eligibility for an application for licensure or expansion for a period of three years from the date the service is discontinued, or until the essential health service is restored, or until such time as DPH is satisfied with a modified plan.

An Act Strengthening the Penalty for Assault or Assault and Battery on an Emergency Medical Technician, Ambulance Operator, Ambulance Attendant or Health Care Provider (SD 685/HD 1329)

Sponsors: Senator Michael Brady/Representative Denise Garlick

Assaults on health care providers, including nurses, are on the rise. Health care workers experience the most non-fatal workplace violence, with attacks on these professions accounting for nearly 70% of all non-fatal workplace assaults. Thirty-three other states have laws on the books making assault on a nurse a felony- but Massachusetts is not one of them. This bill would increase the penalties for assaulting emergency medical technicians, ambulance operators, ambulance attendants and other health care providers, including nurses, and make it a felony punishable by up to five years in state prison.

An Act Relative to Creating Intensive Stabilization and Treatment Units within the Department of Mental Health (SD 1223/HD 126)

Sponsors: Senator Marc Pacheco/Representative Patricia Haddad

This bill would create two Intensive Stabilization and Treatment units within the Department of Mental Health- one for males and one for females. Under this bill, patients exhibiting extreme aggression, highly assaultive behavior and/or self-destructive behavior would be admitted to a specialized unit. These units would be highly physically separate, secure, structured environments with specially trained staff, in order to protect all patients and staff.

An Act Relative to Creating a Pilot Program to Transfer High Acuity Behavioral Health and Dual Diagnosis Patients Away from Crowded Emergency Departments (SD 1244 /HD 81)

Sponsors: Senator Marc Pacheco/Representative Patricia Haddad

A recent study found that more than 40,000 patients suffering from acute mental illness are boarding for days or even weeks in our hospitals emergency departments each year, leaving these patients languishing without care and impacting staff's ability to provide care to other patients requiring emergency medical care. This bill would create a pilot program at Taunton State Hospital to transfer medically stable, high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments until such time that an appropriate placement is found to meet the patient's needs.

An Act Ensuring Safe Medication Administration (SD 1247/HD 1103)

Sponsors: Senator Marc Pacheco/Representative Dan Donahue

In an effort to cut costs, the state of Massachusetts, and other private sector health care providers have implemented programs that allow unlicensed, inadequately trained staff to administer a variety of medications that should only be administered by registered nurses. This bill would prohibit the dangerous practice of unlicensed personnel distributing medication.

An Act Relative to Liability Protection for Disaster Volunteers (SD 1748/HD 2389)

Sponsors: Senator Michael Rush/Representative Sean Garballey

Nurses are often on the frontlines in the event of a disaster or state of emergency. This bill would protect nurses liability while serving as a volunteer. It would also address instances in which a nurse personally suffers an injury in the course of providing volunteer service in a disaster or emergency occurring in the Commonwealth and would consider a volunteer nurse who sustains injury or disability or who is killed while serving as a volunteer an employee of the Commonwealth with access to certain benefits associated with that designation.

An Act Relative to Credible Service for School Nurses (HD 860)

Sponsors: Representative Claire Cronin

Over the course of a career, a school nurse may work in another setting in his or her capacity as a nurse. This bill would permit school nurses to buy back up to three years of time spent working in the private sector as a nurse. The nurse must pay into the pension system what s/he would have paid for those three years, or fraction thereof, plus interest. Any time thus purchased would be counted toward the nurse's number of years of service when calculating their pension.