

When hospitals don't feel the immediate threat of legislative action to set a safe limit on how many patients a nurse cares for at a time, are they *still* putting *Patients First*?

For over a decade bedside nurses have been fighting for safe patient limits. For years the hospital industry has vehemently opposed setting this kind of patient safety standard. A few years ago, as part of the industry's campaign to demonstrate why they can police themselves, the industry unveiled, to great fanfare, the website initiative www.PatientsFirstma.org.

The initiative's goal was to provide the public with a place to review staffing plans that hospitals would voluntarily put in place. This website was trumpeted as *the* solution to the crisis in patient care caused by understaffing. Here's what the industry said at the time:

*"Making staffing plans available through this website and through public posting in hospitals is unique to Massachusetts. We're the first state to do it and we're proud of our commitment to keeping patients informed about the care they receive. In the future we're committed to posting hospital-specific information – in an easy-to-understand way – about certain care measures relating to nurse staffing."*¹



Bedside nurses were skeptical and continued to push for a law – not a website - to protect their patients. They were right to do so. Posting staffing plans on a website didn't turn out to be any more effective than the industry's previous practice of dangerously understaffing RNs. Patients continued to suffer.

What does the industry that championed this website think of it now? Well, we are halfway through 2009 and the hospital industry has yet to report on 2008, let alone post their 2009 plans!

Safe limits will improve patient care, will help retain RNs and will contribute to the prevention of expensive medical errors and hospital acquired infections. The way to keep patients safe is not through a website that no one bothers to update, but by passing safe patient limits. Please support HB 3912/SB 890, An Act Relative to Patient Safety.

1-Patients First Website, <http://www.patientsfirstma.org/staffing/>. Massachusetts Hospital Association.



Staffing Plans

A GUIDE TO CAREGIVING IN MASSACHUSETTS HOSPITALS:

We are lucky to live in Massachusetts where we have some of the best hospitals in the world. Our hospitals are well known for their innovation, medical breakthroughs, and pioneering research. But all those discoveries would fail to save lives if it weren't for the caring and compassionate team of trained professionals who take care of you when you are in one of our hospitals.

Being a patient in Massachusetts can be stressful. You know and trust your doctor but he or she is not always available to you throughout your stay. So, who is?

The answer is – a lot of people who work in our hospitals and it all depends on how ill you are, what you need, and what kind of hospital is treating you.

This website is designed to help you understand the staffing plans for each hospital in the Commonwealth. It also provides information to help you or a loved one during a hospital stay.

Please remember: Each patient is unique and his or her conditions may change from hour-to-hour, shift-to-shift, requiring changes to the staffing plans outlined on this site. Also, remember: the following are staffing **plans**. Massachusetts hospitals are committed to filing their actual plans beginning next year and to explain what actions were taken if there is a significant variation from the plan (+/-5%).

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This website will also explain the people who work in our hospitals and how they may be involved in your care.

Below, you can print out a brochure to take with you when you go to the hospital or when visiting a friend or loved one.

STAFFING

2006 REPORTS ►

2007 PLANS ►

2007 REPORTS ►

2008 PLANS ►

Disclaimer: Although every effort has been made to ensure reliability of the data collected, compiled and presented on our website, MHA does not make any warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of any information. If you believe that some information pertaining to a particular hospital may be incorrect please [contact us](#).

THE CARE TEAM

What's the difference between a Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Nurse Practitioner? [Click here for a list of definitions of Who's Who on your care team.](#)

FAQs

What's the difference between a "Teaching Hospital" and a "Specialty Hospital"? And what exactly is a "Staffing Plan"? [Find out the answers to these and other questions by clicking here.](#)

SAMPLE STAFFING PLAN

Before going to a specific hospital to view its unit-by-unit staffing plan, [click here for a sample staffing plan with descriptions and definitions.](#)

Where is the plan for 2009?