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Virginia's Hospitals Support Nurse Staffing Committee Model to Promote Collaboration, Enhance Clinical Care, and Address Workforce Challenges

Developed in collaboration with the Virginia Nurses Association, the Nurse Staffing Committee Model Has Been Endorsed by the VHHA and VNA Boards of Directors as a Method to Empower Nurses as Partners in Developing Staffing Strategies

RICHMOND, VA – Frontline nurses play a key role in providing direct patient care across clinical settings and are often the 'eyes and ears' at health care facilities, giving nurses unique insight on patient needs and workload challenges.

In recognition of that, the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) and the Virginia Nurses Association (VNA) spent the past year developing strategies to elevate the voice of frontline nurses so that their valuable perspectives and ideas are shared with hospital leaders. The result of that work is the creation of a framework and principles for establishing Nurse Staffing Committee models in Virginia hospitals. The Committee framework provides a structured template for this work while also allowing flexibility for individual hospitals to customize plans appropriate for their unique needs.

The VHHA Board of Directors has unanimously voted to adopt the Nurse Staffing Committee framework and implement Committees in their facilities. These formal actions affirm the importance of hospital leaders partnering with nurses on issues related to staffing and care delivery. The Committee framework provides a structured template for this work while also allowing flexibility for individual hospitals to customize plans appropriate for their unique needs.

“As we contend with ongoing workforce challenges, including persistent nursing shortages, and devise responsive strategies, it is imperative that the voice and perspective of frontline nurses are part of these important discussions and contributors to the solutions,” said Eric Deaton, Ballad Health Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President and Immediate Past Chair of the VHHA Board of Directors. “The Nurse Staffing Committee framework provides a template that can be employed to strengthen communication and feedback pathways between frontline nurses, nursing leaders, and hospital administrators. Having these important conversations and working collaboratively on solutions is more important than ever as the health care community continues to grapple with workforce shortages.”

Future staffing shortages are projected across a variety of clinical roles including physicians, nursing, behavioral health care, and more. Specialized training and education, which can take years to complete, is required to fill these technical and specialized roles, which makes it even more challenging to address health care workforce challenges. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) forecasts that registered nurse employment is expected “to grow 6 percent from 2022 to 2032, faster than the average for all occupations” with an average of 193,100 registered nurse openings each year across the U.S. to replace nurses who leave the profession due to retirement or other factors. BLS further predicts rising demands for health care services due to an aging population that may have higher utilization of medical services. Registered nurse employment in the U.S. was 3.17 million in 2022 and is expected to grow to 3.45 million in 2032. In Virginia, more than 8,900 hospital jobs across various clinical roles are open, including more than 3,300 nursing jobs.

“As the largest and most trusted healthcare profession, the voice of nursing at all levels is critical in developing sustainable and innovative solutions for staffing,” said Dr. Sherri Wilson, RN, FAAN, President of the Virginia Nurses Association. “The evidence clearly indicates that the well-being, health, and safety of nurses and their patients are inextricably linked. I am enthusiastic about this partnership and eagerly anticipate collaborating to disseminate the results of our efforts.”

The Nurse Staffing Committee framework has been developed to facilitate enhanced collaboration between hospital leaders and bedside nurses on the development of innovative staffing solutions to address healthcare team workload and drive quality and safety improvements within existing system constraints. The model can be customized to function within existing organizational structures at hospitals with unique features and can work alongside existing programs to engage with nurses.

Framework planning and implementation will occur in close coordination with Virginia hospital chief nursing officers and nursing leaders who helped develop the model and VHHA will offer technical assistance and support to hospitals as they move forward on this work.

About VHHA: The [Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association](#) is an alliance of 111 hospitals and 26 health delivery systems that develops and advocates for sound health care policy in the Commonwealth. Its mission is to achieve excellence in both health care and health to make Virginia the healthiest state in the nation. Its vision is through collaboration with members and stakeholders, to ensure the sustainability of Virginia’s health care system, transform the delivery of care to promote lower costs and

high value across the continuum of care, and to improve health for all Virginians. Connect with VHHA through [Facebook](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

About VNA: The [Virginia Nurses Association](#) is the professional organization representing the interests of more than 121,000 registered nurses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, inclusive of all areas of specialization, clinical settings, and work environments. In concert with their national partner, the American Nurses Association, VNA is dedicated to advancing nurses and the nursing profession through advocacy and education. Connect with VNA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

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