Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law

Submitted by Cabinet on Health Policy

Type of Action Report: Substantive Action Report

This action report is brought forward because of the need to strengthen Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law.

Recommended Actions:

- ONA will pursue Legislation based on the following core principles:
  - Strengthen the Staffing Committees and empower direct care nurses on the committee
  - Give the state more tools to actively enforce the law
  - Increase transparency at both the hospital and state level
  - Create an advisory board to the state agency responsible for enforcement (HCRQI) to identify trends and problem areas and increase state accountability
  - Improve working conditions around mandatory overtime, meal and rest breaks

Background and Rationale:

In 2012, the House of Delegates passed an Action Report calling on ONA to move forward and make changes to Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law, last updated in 2005.

Since that time, ONA has convened a Staffing Law Review Group, first described by the 2012 action report. That group has reviewed the current statute and rules in detail and in collaboration with other structural entities, leaders, and members of ONA have developed a framework for strengthening and updating Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law.

While nearly 10 years have passed since the implementation of the law, ONA members report that staffing is still a top concern, and that the law needs to be strengthened and enforcement significantly improved.

Data collected from the Staffing Request and Documentation Forms (SRDFs) shows a disconcerting trend of increasing incidents of unsafe staffing over the past few years.

Staffing remains one of the leading indicators of nurses’ job satisfaction, and is tied to patient safety.

For these reasons, The Oregon Nurses Association should continue to prioritize development and passage of Staffing Legislation in the 2015 Legislative Session.

Implementation:

- A Staffing Grassroots Action Committee will be formed to coordinate outreach to ONA members, the media, and Legislators in cooperation with Government Relations staff.
- ONA will reach out to potential partner organizations and opponents to review our proposed changes to the law and build a coalition around this work.
• Periodic updates will be given to all ONA Cabinets and in organization wide communications.

Financial Impact:

Exact costs unknown at this point. Costs will include increased travel and lodging for members and staff in conjunction with grassroots work with nurses and legislators, as well as strategic and targeted communications work, including outreach to members of the public in certain parts of the state. This priority work is assumed to be a part of existing departments and staff.