

# Reinforcing the Texas Nurse Staff Staffing Statute (TX HB 2187)



In 2024, Governor Greg Abbott established a Healthcare Workforce Task Force to study and recommend solutions for healthcare workforce policy challenges. This one-pager addresses Recommendation 10 from the task force's report.

Texas is estimated to have a deficit of 44,678 Registered Nurses (RNs) as of 2022 and is projected to have a deficit of 56,370 RNs by 2036.

In 2009, the Texas Legislature passed a nurse staffing statute and prohibition on mandatory overtime for nurses to alleviate one of the primary sources of dissatisfaction in the nursing profession – **short staffing of hospital units**.

The 2009 law protected patients and better organized the staffing policies of Texas hospitals. It charted out a cooperative process between nursing staff and hospital administrators, with review by the hospital's governing body.

The system was highly effective, until the COVID-19 pandemic sent hospitals into a chronic state of crisis staffing for three years. In the aftermath of the pandemic, Texas nurses have consistently reported a breakdown in the hospital staffing system to the Texas Nurses Association. It still has not returned to pre-pandemic regular order.

**Insufficient staffing leads to:**

- **Worse patient outcomes;**
- **Elevated nursing turnover and early resignation; and**
- **Decreased satisfaction with the nursing profession.**

Open records research by the Texas Nurses Association shows approximately 5% of hospitals voluntarily report to the state they are not in compliance with the statute, and enforcement records indicate a lack of enforcement actions to bring these hospitals into compliance.

Staffing has been identified by Texas nurses as their top priority to address in the 89th Regular Session.

Texas is currently spending significant sums of taxpayer money to educate new nurses and address the nursing shortage. That spending is severely needed, but it will be wasted if the state fails to simultaneously address the breakdown in enforcement and compliance with the nurse staffing statute and prohibition on mandatory overtime.

We ask the Texas Legislature to fix this urgent problem.  
Support House Bill 2187 and protect patients and nursing by demanding enforcement of the laws on the books.

