



Dear Members of the Michigan Legislature:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336. These bills have the potential to severely impede access to essential healthcare services for our residents in Michigan. The claims that these bills will address the nursing shortages in our state are, unfortunately, far from the truth.

Michigan hospitals are facing a significant challenge in filling approximately [8,500 job openings](#) for nurses right now. With 85% of licensed registered nurses (RNs) living in Michigan under the age of 65 currently working in healthcare, the supply of available nurses to hire is limited. Instituting a one-size-fits-all mandate requiring hospitals to hire more nurses who do not exist will have extremely detrimental effects on the services hospitals can offer to their communities. It will lead to prolonged waiting times for patients, hinder the ability of hospitals to respond to crises and reduce the access to healthcare services that Michiganders need.

Increased burnout, stress and violence are leading nurses to leave the field in droves. A [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report](#) shows healthcare workers reporting harassment were six times more likely to report burnout than workers who did not. Staffing ratios are not a proven solution to this problem nor to RN staffing shortages. [California](#) is the only state to mandate ratios for all hospital departments, and they have a shortage of 40,000 RNs, despite having mandated staffing ratios for 25 years.

As experienced nurses serving in leadership positions in Michigan healthcare systems, and who witness the effects of the workforce shortage firsthand, we firmly believe tangible, proven steps are needed to attract more nurses to Michigan and address the shortage – not one-size-fits-all staffing ratios. This includes, but is not limited to, enacting legislation that allows Michigan to join the national Nurse Licensure Compact, expanding Michigan Reconnect eligibility and increasing penalties for those who commit acts of violence against healthcare workers.

Our organization, the Michigan Organization for Nursing Leadership, and our colleagues at additional Michigan nursing organizations such as the American Nurses Association - Michigan and Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing, are committed to focusing on effective solutions that support our nurses *and* ensure safe patient care. Michigan hospitals, health systems and Nursing Leaders have been working diligently to address the nursing shortage in recent years and achieving significant progress, including:

- Obtaining \$300 million in state funding to benefit at least [69,000 healthcare workers](#) for recruitment, retention and training.
- Securing additional nurse training opportunities, such as expanding Michigan Reconnect to support the transition of Michiganders from licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to RNs and from patient care technicians to LPNs.

- [Launching](#) a statewide public awareness campaign targeting high school students and professionals considering a career change to express the value of healthcare careers.
- Providing emotional well-being support to healthcare workers through a partnership with the Duke Center for Healthcare Safety and Quality.

To be clear, Michigan nurses universally recognize the numerous and daunting challenges facing nurses related to shortages and inequitable workforce distribution. We all share a common agreement on the importance of safe staffing care delivery models and assignments, and support innovation in care delivery. However, rather than antiquated one-size-fits-all ratio thinking, our organization **believes staffing decisions should be made by nurses and nurse leaders at the local hospital level, taking into consideration multiples of variables including patient acuity, nursing competence and availability of additional support staff to name just a few and should not be limited to statewide legislative mandated ratios.**

We acknowledge the serious outcomes of the pandemic including the negative impact on nurse well-being, nurse retention and patient outcomes. It is extremely important to be fully informed with the collective perspectives of nurses representing all sectors to find the best solutions and produce the desired outcomes. Without informed perspectives, unintended consequences will occur.

In conclusion, we respectfully request you withdraw your support for House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336 and explore alternative solutions that will better address the nursing shortages in our state while preserving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for our residents. We are committed to working collaboratively with you and other stakeholders to find solutions that truly benefit Michiganders.

Respectfully submitted,
The MONL Board of Directors

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