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NEWS RELEASE



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Seven of 10 Nurses Report Insufficient Staffing, According to ANA Online Poll
Poll Indicates That Staffing Problems Driving Nurses from Positions

SILVER SPRING, MD – More than seven in ten nurses said that staffing on their unit and shift is insufficient, and more than half said they are currently considering leaving their position, according to an American Nurses Association (ANA) online poll that drew more than 15,000 responses.

The poll, which has been posted on ANA’s Safe Staffing Saves Lives Campaign Web site (www.SafeStaffingSavesLives.org) since March 2008, showed that about 7,900 of the 15,000 respondents said they are considering leaving their position. About 42%, or 6,300 of the 15,000 respondents, said the reason they would leave is associated with inadequate staffing. Also, more than one in three nurses reported that they knew a nurse on their unit who left direct care nursing due to concerns about unsafe staffing.

“These results confirm what we have long been hearing from registered nurses: that unsafe staffing on their units is their top concern,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR. “Nurses take our profession’s Code of Ethics very seriously. When obligations to our patients are compromised because there are not enough nurses on hospital units to provide the highest quality of care, registered nurses are understandably frustrated. ANA has a long track record of advocating for safe staffing conditions for the nation’s 2.9 million registered nurses.”

In 2007, ANA launched its “Safe Staffing Saves Lives” grassroots campaign calling for sufficient nurse staffing levels in healthcare facilities and supporting staffing legislation ANA crafted with members of Congress. Known as “The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act,” the legislation is expected to be re-introduced in Congress later this year.

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The legislation would require hospitals to develop nurse staffing plans, with input from direct-care nurses, for each care unit and work shift, based on factors such as patient acuity, number of patients, nurse skill mix and experience and available resources, such as support staff and technology.

Seven states have passed nurse safe staffing legislation that closely resembles ANA's model, including five states since 2008.

The online poll also revealed that nurses are in a severe time crunch during their work hours. Nearly one-quarter said their work schedule rarely allows them to take a full meal break – which translates into a full meal break less than one time per month. Nearly two-thirds said they must perform non-nursing activities daily, such as delivering meals, transporting patients and making pharmacy runs, in addition to nursing duties for which they are trained.

“The staffing issue is not only about ensuring there are enough nurses to properly care for patients, but about employing sufficient support staff so nurses can do the vital work with patients that they are trained to do,” said ANA President Patton. “Anything that takes away from that potentially can result in declines in the quality of care and safety for patients.”

The survey also showed that:

- More than half (51.6%) said the quality of care on their unit had declined in the past year
- Nearly half (49.5%) would not feel confident having someone close to them receive care in the facility in which they work
- Nearly one-quarter (23.9%) said they were considering leaving nursing altogether

Of those taking the survey, 83.6% said they work at a hospital, and 75.8% said they work full-time. Nearly 75% identified themselves as a “staff nurse.” Experience levels were broadly distributed, with about 55% reporting less than 15 years experience and 45% more than 15 years.

Results to some of the poll questions can be found here:

<http://www.safestaffingsaveslives.org/WhatisANADoing/PollResults.aspx>

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 51 constituent member nurses associations and its 24 specialty nursing and workforce advocacy affiliate organizations that currently connect to ANA as affiliates. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.