



TO: The Honorable Members of the PA House Health Committee
FROM: Alex Halper, VP, Government Affairs
DATE: June 6, 2023
RE: **Oppose H.B. 106 Mandatory Nurse Ratios**

The PA Chamber urges you to oppose H.B. 106, which would establish government-mandated nurse staffing ratios in Pennsylvania hospitals. While well intended, this mandate could have serious negative repercussions for patients and businesses throughout Pennsylvania. The bill is scheduled to be considered by the Health Committee today.

There is a well-documented nationwide nurse shortage and Pennsylvania [is expected to be the worst in the nation](#). In fact, [a recent study](#) by the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania shows that more than 30 percent of registered nurse positions in Pennsylvania hospitals are currently vacant. We support efforts to address nurse shortages, such as streamlining the licensure process, improving reciprocity for out-of-state health care professionals, and efforts to grow the pipeline of new nurses.

Government-mandated ratios will not help address nurse shortages and could trigger unintended consequences, including reduced services, bed closures, and even hospital closures. If emergency rooms reach their maximum patient limit, they will be forced to turn patients away or be subjected to monetary penalties. The impact will also be felt by other health care providers, nursing homes, outpatient clinics, and behavioral health providers who are already competing with hospitals for the same limited number of available nurses.

Nurse staffing ratios could also increase health care costs for Pennsylvania patients and employers by as much as \$2 billion. [An independent study](#) found that a similar proposal in Massachusetts (which has half the population and fewer than half the number of hospitals of Pennsylvania) would cost up to \$949 million a year. Massachusetts voters rejected a proposed ballot measure in 2018 with 70 percent against it. Similarly, [a study](#) by the New York Department of Health found that strict staffing ratios would cost an additional \$1.8 to \$2.4 billion in New York. A Pennsylvania specific study should be conducted before considering H.B. 106.

Government-mandated nurse staffing ratios could also take away flexibility and hinder innovative solutions to our health care staffing needs. Pennsylvania should support, not restrict, alternative delivery models, including advances in technology that are designed to enhance cost-effective treatment and management of health care.

For these reasons we urge you to oppose H.B. 106. Please contact Alex Halper at ahalper@pachamber.org or 717-645-8730 with questions or to discuss.