

Memorandum

To: Michigan Nurses Association
From: Chris Anderson, Lauren Coates
Date: March 21, 2016
RE: Survey of Michigan Registered Nurses

This memorandum summarizes the key findings from a statewide survey of 401 Michigan Registered Nurses. Interviewing was conducted March 2 – 14, 2016. The margin of error associated with the overall results is +/- 4.9% at a 95% confidence interval. A full methodological description is included at the end of this document.

Executive Summary

A large majority of Registered Nurses in Michigan believe patient care is suffering due to RNs being required to care for too many patients at once. Understaffing is by far the most frequent obstacle RNs face in doing their jobs, and nearly six-in-ten hospital RNs feel that they do not have enough time to give needed attention to patients.

Most nurses are aware of a range of negative patient outcomes from unsafe patient loads, including: infections, injuries, re-admission, longer stays, and even death.

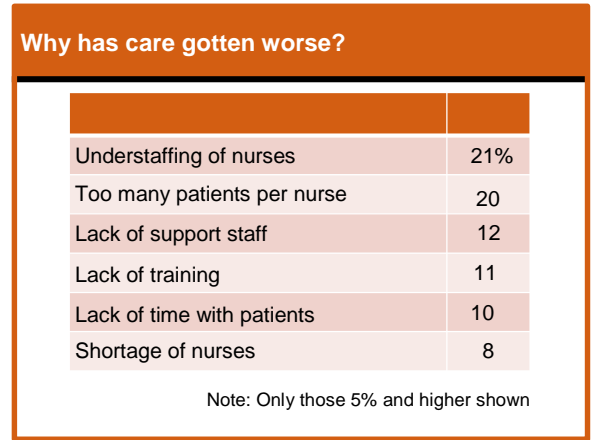
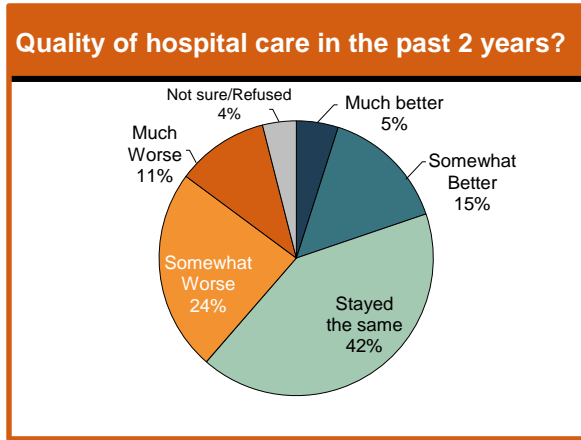
Fully 50% of hospital RNs say they are assigned an unsafe patient workload on half or more of their shifts. And when unsafe patient loads are reported to management, half of hospital RNs say loads are rarely or never adjusted.

Nearly two-thirds of RNs working in Michigan hospitals believe staffing levels are based more on financial factors than on patient acuity.

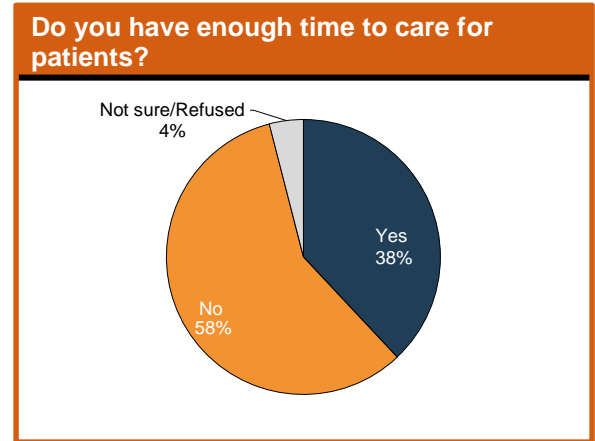
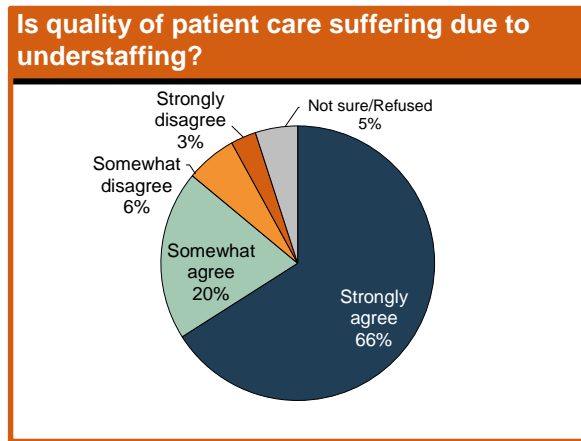
Michigan RNs are overwhelmingly supportive of legislating safe patient limits, with over eight-in-ten saying doing so would improve the quality of patient care.

Summary of Key Findings

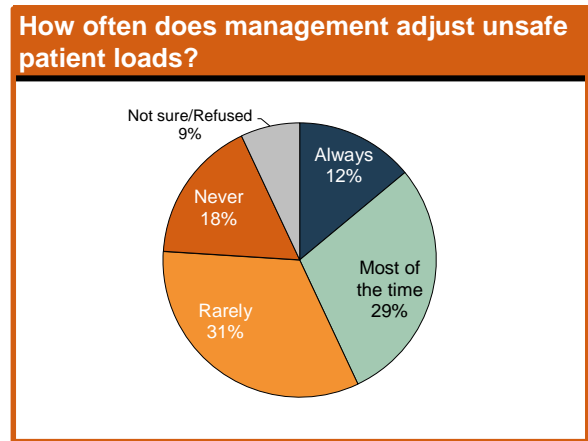
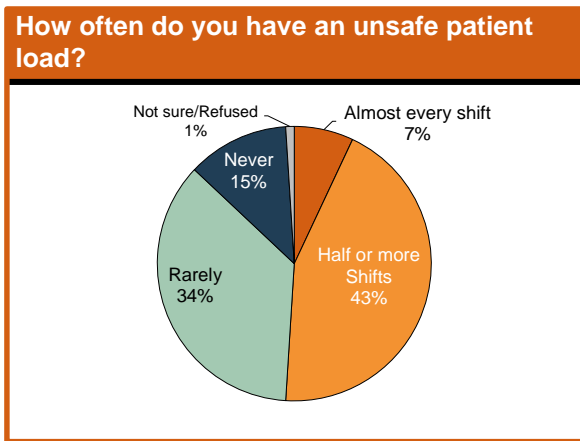
RNs are more likely to think that the quality of patient care in the state’s hospitals has gotten worse than better in the past two years. Among those who think care is worse, staffing issues are cited as the main reason.



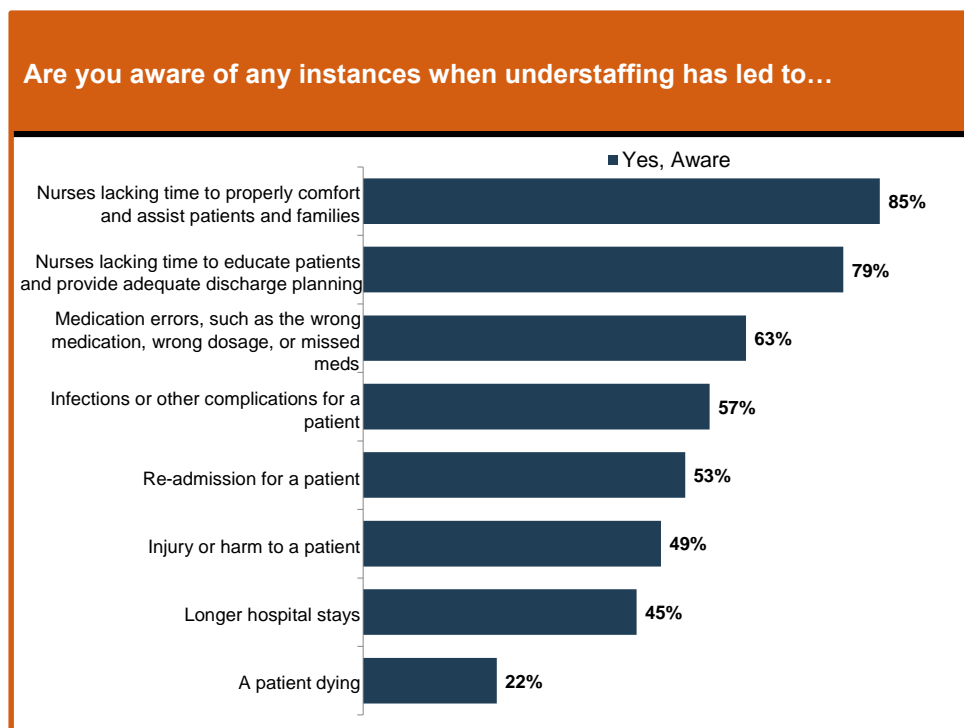
More than eight-in-ten (86%) RNs believe that the quality of patient care is suffering due to over-assignment of patients, and nearly six-in-ten (58%) hospital RNs feel that they do not have enough time to provide patients with the necessary care.



Half (50%) of hospital RNs say they are assigned an unsafe patient load at least half of the time they're working. Among those who do have an unsafe patient load, almost half (49%) say management usually does not adjust patient assignments.

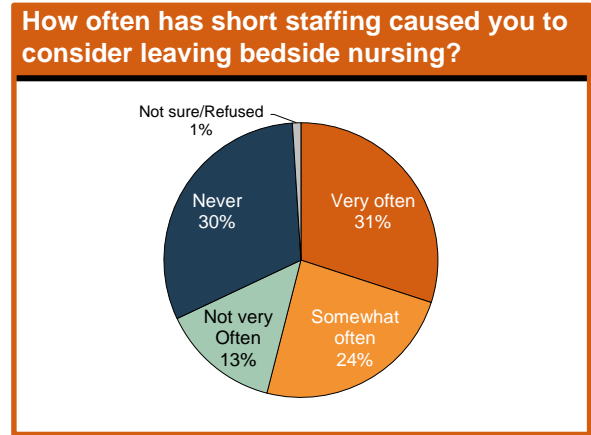
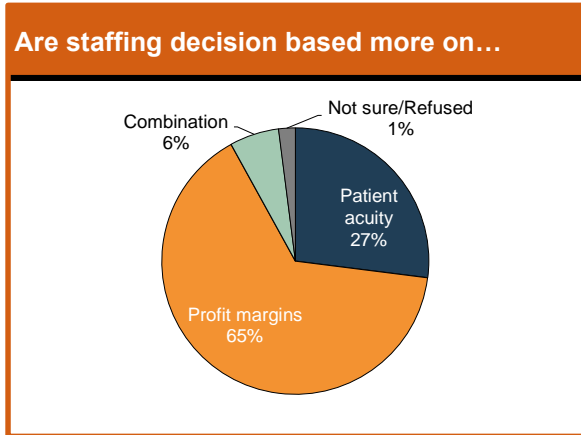


In addition, nurses are aware of a range of specific negative patient outcomes as a result of inadequate staffing, with more than one-in-five (22%) reporting awareness of a patient's death.

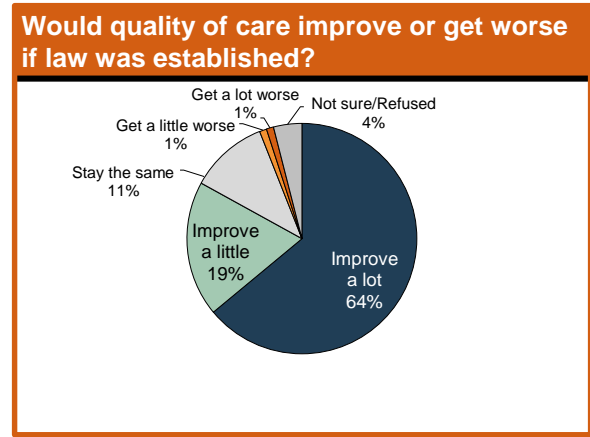
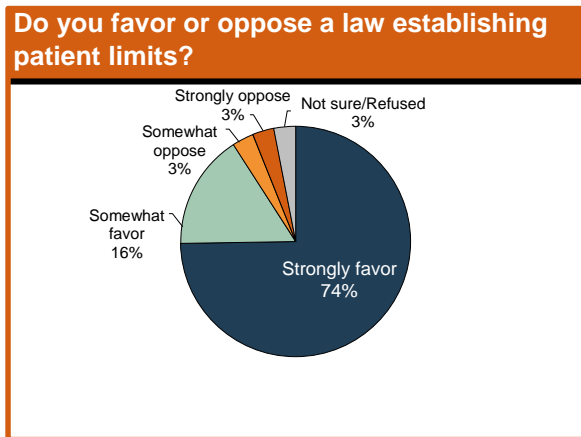


Nearly two-thirds (65%) of hospital RNs say that staffing decisions are made based on hospital finances and profit margins rather than patient acuity.

More than half (55%) of hospital RNs have often considered leaving bedside nursing because of short staffing.



Michigan RNs overwhelmingly favor passing a law to establish a limit on the number of patients a nurse is assigned at one time. More than eight-in-ten (83%) RNs agree that the proposed law will improve the quality of patient care.



Methodology

A total of 401 interviews with Michigan Registered Nurses were conducted by trained professionals working from a central, monitored location. Respondents were randomly selected from a list of all registered nurses licensed in Michigan and screened to identify those currently working in hospitals and those working outside of a hospital. Of the 401 respondents, 200 work in a hospital providing direct patient care, 160 work in healthcare outside of a hospital setting, and the remaining work in a hospital but do not provide acute care. Additionally, 48 respondents are members of the Michigan Nurses Association and the remainder are not members. The Michigan Nurses Association was not revealed to respondents as the sponsor of the research until after interviews were complete.