![MI NURSES Association logo]

Nurses report alarming rates of preventable harm in Michigan hospitals

Independent survey reveals 86% of RNs say patient care is suffering because they are assigned too many patients; 22% report patient death directly linked to unsafe assignments

Michigan's Registered Nurses are frequently forced to care for too many patients at once, and patients are being harmed as a result, according to a new independent survey that is the first of its kind ever done in Michigan.

Nearly 9-in-10 (86%) of RNs said patient care is suffering because they are assigned too many patients. Half (50%) of the Registered Nurses surveyed said they have an unsafe number of patients on at least half their shifts.

"We should pay attention when Registered Nurses are telling us there's a problem with hospital safety, because they are the ones who provide most of the patient care," said **state Rep. Ed McBroom** (R-Vulcan). "I hope this survey helps spark a public conversation about making sure every hospital provides proper nursing care. Protecting patients from harm should be a concern for all of us, on both sides of the aisle, no matter where you live."

Nurses reported awareness of various negative outcomes caused by RNs being assigned too many patients, including:

- 22% report a patient dying
- 57% report infections or other complications
- 49% report injury or harm to a patient
- 63% report medication errors
- 53% report patient readmission

Registered nurses overwhelmingly cite understaffing as the biggest obstacle to providing safe, quality care and many say management is not responsive to their concerns.

"This survey shines a light on the fact that too many patients are being harmed in the hospital when they should be healing," said **John Armelagos**, RN and President of the Michigan Nurses Association. "The findings are consistent with years of scientific research that show a clear link between RN understaffing and

poor patient outcomes, as well as heartbreaking stories we hear from nurses in every corner of Michigan. Hospital safety has become a public health crisis that must be addressed."

Although the Michigan Nurses Association commissioned the poll, fully 87% of the nurses surveyed have no affiliation with the Association.

Both groups overwhelmingly support a law to limit the number of patients a nurse can be assigned.

Rep. McBroom is one of 42 lawmakers in the House and Senate who have signed on to legislation to set such standards in hospitals. The bipartisan Safe Patient Care Act (HB 5013 and SB 574) establishes minimum nurse-to-patient ratios per unit; limits mandatory RN overtime that compromises patient safety; and includes accountability and transparency requirements for hospitals.

The survey also found that the hospital industry is not addressing patient safety concerns adequately:

- 49% of RNs say management rarely or never adjusts their workload when they report unsafe assignments
- 36% say hospital administrators are not responsive to input from RNs about patient assignments and staffing levels
- 65% of nurses say that staffing decisions are based more on finances and profit margins than patient need

The survey was released in conjunction with hundreds of nurses and nursing students rallying at the Capitol, urging support of the Safe Patient Care Act and a committee hearing.

State Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) praised the nurses for continuing to advocate for their patients.

"Legislators have a responsibility to enact public policy that enables Registered Nurses to do their jobs and keep people safe in Michigan's hospitals," said Warren, the sponsor of the Safe Patient Care Act in the Senate. "Hospitals have a duty to provide sufficient staff to ensure adequate patient care. It's time to make progress on patient safety legislation, because it truly can be a matter of life or death."

About the survey
The polling memo is available for download at http://bit.ly/MIRNsurvey. The survey was conducted March 2-14, 2016, by the independent firm Anderson Robbins Research. A total of 401 interviews with Michigan Registered Nurses were conducted by trained professionals working from a central, monitored location. The margin of error associated with the overall results is +/- 4.9% at a 95% confidence interval. 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. The Michigan Nurses Association was not revealed to respondents as the sponsor of the research until after interviews were complete.