



Get the facts about Registered Nurse  
staffing and patient safety

# More than 1,000 preventable deaths every day

**Preventable deaths from health care are now the third leading cause of death in America.**

An estimated 440,000 avoidable deaths take place in American hospitals each year due to adverse events that proper nursing care can often prevent.\* These can include surgical-site infections, bloodstream infections, shock or cardiac arrest, ventilator-acquired pneumonia, gastrointestinal bleeding, deep venous thrombosis (blood clots) after surgery, patients falls, missed diagnoses, and missed, delayed or incorrect medication.

Here's just a few of the dozens of scientific studies showing the link between low registered nurse staffing and higher rates of serious patient complications and death in our hospitals:

People who go into cardiac arrest while hospitalized are **5 percent less likely to survive** for each additional patient assigned to their nurse.

*Medical Care, January 2016*

ICU patients are **3.5 times more likely to die** when the nurse-patient ratio is higher than 1 to 2.5. *Critical Care Medicine, August 2015*

Stroke patients are up to **35 percent more likely to die** on units with fewer nurses on duty.

*PLOS Medicine, August 2014*

Adding one surgical patient to a nurse's workload increases the **likelihood of patient death within 30 days of admission by 7 percent.**

*The Lancet, 2014*

Hospitals with better nurse staffing levels had **25 percent lower** odds of being penalized for preventable readmissions.

*Health Affairs, October 2013*

**Death rates are 60 percent lower** for patients with aortic abdominal aneurysm in hospitals with better nurse-to-patient ratios.

*Health Services Research, June 2013*

**Likelihood of readmission for children within 30 days of surgery is 48 percent higher** when just one child is added to the staffing ratio.

*BMJ Quality & Safety in Health Care, May 2013*

Patients in hospitals with higher RN staffing levels were **68 percent less likely to acquire an infection.** *Medical Care, June 2007*

\*"A new, evidence-based estimate of patient harms associated with hospital care," *Journal of Patient Safety, September 2013*