

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Section

1 Standards of Care Act. Adds § 144.591.

Subd. 1. Title. Titles this section “Standards of Care Act.”

Subd. 2. Definitions. Defines terms used in this section, including the following: assignment; direct care registered nurse; nursing intensity; patient acuity; skill mix; surveillance; and unit.

Subd. 3. Staffing. Requires hospitals, as a condition of licensure, to provide enough qualified registered nursing personnel on duty to provide a standard of care necessary for the well-being of patients. Requires staffing consistent with certain nationally accepted standards identified by the Department of Health.

Requires the department to review research and develop a staffing standard for units where there is no established standard. Requires consultation with specified organizations.

Subd. 4. Assignment adjustments. Requires that adjustments in staffing levels on a shift-to-shift basis must be made in accordance with procedures developed by a Safe Patient Assignment Committee, required under subdivision 5. Provides that a direct care registered nurse may not be disciplined for refusing to accept an assignment she judges is unsafe.

Subd. 5. Safe Patient Assignment Committee. Requires hospitals to establish a Safe Patient Assignment Committee by July 1, 2014. Provides requirements for committee membership and duties of the committees.

Section

Subd. 6. Posting staffing levels. Requires staffing levels for each unit to be posted in the unit and waiting areas. Requires the commissioner to post the standards developed under subd. 3 to be posted on the department's website.

Subd. 7. Job retention. Prohibits the layoff of hospital employees as a result of implementing this act, and provides that the number of full-time employee positions among nurses and nursing assistants are not to be reduced as a result of the act.

Subd. 8. Reporting. Requires hospitals to publicly report hours-per-patient that registered nurses spend on all patient care units. Requires these report quarterly beginning March 31, 2014. The reports must be submitted to the Department of Health and posted on the department's website. Requires that, beginning March 31, 2015, hospitals publicly report patient outcomes relative to actual hours worked by registered nurses.

Subd. 9. Enforcement. Permits the commissioner to sanction a hospital for failure to comply with the provisions of this section, including failure to staff at required levels.

Subd. 10. Exception. Provides that this section does not apply to critical access hospitals.