

MI NURSES Association

Legislative Priorities

The nurse leaders of the Michigan Nurses Association, the largest labor and professional organization representing registered nurses in Michigan, direct the organization's public policy agenda.

MNA is a nonpartisan organization. We strive to work with all lawmakers, regardless of party, to advance public policy that supports nurses, patients and all workers. We take our responsibility to be the voice of ALL registered nurses very seriously.

As an overriding legislative principle, "MNA is committed to protecting the unique role of registered nurses; increasing access and quality of health care; promoting the health and safety of our patients and communities; fostering the health of our air, water and land; and building a just, equal society for all."

The MNA Board of Directors, on recommendations from the Council on Legislation and Public Policy, has set the top state legislative priorities for the Michigan Nurses Association:

- **Ensure safe patient care** (limits on patient assignments and on forced overtime)
- **Make workplaces safer for nurses**
- **Protect collective bargaining rights**

Ensure safe patient care

MNA is the only Michigan organization working to address many RNs' top concern: being forced to take care of too many patients and work an unsafe number of hours. There is no law limiting the number of patients a nurse can be assigned and no law limiting the hours a nurse can be ordered to work. Understaffing and overworking RNs can put patients at serious risk.

MNA supports the bipartisan Safe Patient Care Act, which will protect patients by establishing safe RN-to-patient ratios in all hospitals at all times, limiting forced RN overtime, and requiring hospitals to tell the public their nurse staffing levels. (Bill numbers for 2019-2020 are pending.) Learn more at www.MISaferHospitals.org.



Make workplaces safer for nurses

Nursing is often a physically demanding and dangerous profession. Nurses face verbal and physical assaults from patients and family members, a growing problem that calls for preventative solutions. Nurses also have a high rate of back and other injuries from lifting and other tasks. Nurses, patients and employers all suffer when a high rate of preventable injuries causes RNs to miss work or leave the profession. Michigan needs better laws to protect registered nurses.

Protect collective bargaining rights

Nurses are the healthcare professionals who spend the most time providing direct care and they serve as a patient's first line of defense. That's why health care works best when nurses have a strong voice in patient care. Collective bargaining is the best tool RNs have to effectively advocate for their patients. Nurses under a collective bargaining agreement can negotiate workplace conditions, such as staffing levels. Nurses in a union also are better protected if they object to unsafe situations or advocate for changes to improve patient care. It's vital to protect nurses' ability to form a union and exercise their full rights.

For more information, contact MNA Government Affairs Director Dawn Kettinger at dawn.kettinger@minurses.org or 517-853-5519.