

March 17, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this document in opposition to the proposed Section 8 of bill SB 1 (*An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic*); nurse-patient ratios in intensive care units.

If this proposed language should go into effect it would be detrimental to the overall financial wellness of Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam, Connecticut. We are a small community hospital that provides excellent care to our community.

I have been a nursing leader for approximately 30 years; for most of my career managing ICUs. This level of staffing is truly not necessary for most ICU patients. There are times that patients do require this level of intense nursing care, and in all my years of managing ICUs the team manages these times quite well. The language in this bill will take away the professional decision-making that is done daily on a moment-to-moment basis.

I oppose this strict level of staffing and the related reporting. This type of language takes away the ability of professional nursing to determine the level of care for the patients we are caring for. Nursing has a long history of being able to make these types of decisions with the patient's best interest at hand.

In my opinion, the existing policies of the Connecticut Department of Public Health are effective.

The other fact that I think needs to be mentioned in opposition to this bill is that we are experiencing a nursing shortage that has no end in sight. Mandates such as this put undue strain on systems, individual hospitals, and the nursing staff caring for these patients. In my opinion, we have just managed through two very considerable spikes in critical care patients in our state. I believe based upon the information I have heard on DPH/CHA calls and experienced here at Day Kimball Hospital, our state and our healthcare professionals rose to the occasion and did a phenomenal job. This type of language would not be supportive to the work that our heroes endured over the past year.

Sincerely,

John O'Keefe, MS, RN
Vice President, Patient Care Services/CNO