



Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, April 17, 2026 at 1:00 P.M.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference
By
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

COMMENTS on HCR 105, HD1/HR 97, HD1

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing (HSCN) provides comments and seeks further clarification on this report. This report addresses an important topic. HSCN accepts the responsibility to compile this information and thanks the House Committee on Health for the clarifications and guidance which resulted in the H.D. 1 version of this resolution. The H.D. 1 revisions to this recommended study prioritizes nursing professional organization ratios for staffing.

While HSCN will compile recommendations for all settings, as currently is written in the H.D. 1 version of this resolution, HSCN notes that A) few recommendations have been produced for non-acute nursing settings and B) in the instances where there is no recommendation, HSCN will note that section as searched with no results. **Further, HSCN's preparatory review found that many of the standards for acute care-focused specialty areas provide strategies alone or in congruence with ratios. A focus on ratios only in this report will exclude a large number of nursing associations whose frameworks do not use ratios. HSCN seeks clarification if the Legislature would like the report focus to be only acute care specialties and whether focus should be only on ratios, or rather, include both strategies and ratios.**

Thank you for your consideration of HSCN's contributions to nursing in Hawai'i and to this conversation. We look forward to your additional guidance as it relates to this request.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

Organization	Standards	Year	Paywall	Ratio or Strategy	Website	Statement	Brief description
(1) American Association of Critical-Care Nurses;	Adult Progressive Care,	2025	yes	Both	https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/aacn-standards	AACN Standards for Appropriate Staffing establishes seven standards intended to improve some of the many processes that affect appropriate registered nurse staffing.	7 strategies, when used together, facilitate standard 7 which is ratios in a 44-page document
	Adult Critical Care,	2024	yes	Both	https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/aacn-standards	AACN Standards for Appropriate Staffing establishes seven standards intended to improve some of the many processes that affect appropriate registered nurse staffing.	7 strategies, when used together, facilitate standard 7 which is ratios in a 44-page document
	Peds (to released April)	2026 (pending)	yes	Both	https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/aacn-standards	AACN Standards for Appropriate Staffing establishes seven standards intended to improve some of the many processes that affect appropriate registered nurse staffing.	7 strategies, when used together, facilitate standard 7 which is ratios in a 44-page document

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

(2) <i>Emergency Nurses Association;</i>	Staffing and Productivity in the Emergency Department	1987, updated 2021	no	Strategy, Recommendations against ratio	https://www.ena.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/Staffing%20and%20Productivity%20in%20the%20Emergency%20Department%20Position%20Statement.pdf	the use of nurse-to-patient ratios is not recommended.	10 item position including background and rationale
(3) <i>Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses;</i>	AWHONN's Staffing Standards	2010, updated in 2022	yes	Both	https://www.awhonn.org/resources-and-information/published-resources/staffing-standards/	A detailed background and rationale for each of the standard nurse-to-patient ratios for professional registered nurse staffing for perinatal units based on acuity (i.e., the dose of nursing care required for safe and effective care) and all of the associated aspects of care recommended by professional and regulatory associations are presented in Table 2.	2-page table as well as 214 pages of rationale

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

<p>(4) American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses;</p>	<p>Practice Recommendation Patient Classification/Staffing Recommendations</p>	<p>2018, updated 2023</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>Both</p>	<p>https://www.aspan.org/Portals/88/Clinical%20Practice%20Recommendations/Patient_Classification-ASPAN-2025Standards_in_PartFOUR.pdf?ver=GLNIDBGOKtr9YVvHOEF0EA%3D%3D</p>	<p>Staffing should reflect patient acuity, nursing competence, and skill mix.</p>	<p>8-page summary including 5 pages of rationale to describe when and how to use ratios</p>
<p>(5) Association of periOperative Registered Nurses;</p>	<p>AORN Position Statement on Perioperative Safe Staffing and On-Call Practices</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>Both</p>	<p>https://www.aorn.org/docs/default-source/guidelines-resources/position-statements/personnel-staffing/posstat-staffingoncall-0721.pdf</p>	<p>The purpose of this position statement is to provide a framework for developing a staffing plan throughout the continuum of perioperative patient care, including the budgeting, planning and implementation of the plan.</p>	<p>16-page document with 3 pages of tables for staffing</p>

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

(6) <i>Oncology Nursing Society;</i>	Staffing of Ambulatory Treatment Centers	2022	no	Both	https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Staffing%20of%20Ambulatory%20Treatment%20Centers.pdf	No standard staffing model or nurse–patient ratio currently exists for ambulatory infusion, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy treatment centers.	2-page document with positions
(7) <i>Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses;</i>	Staffing Standards for Patient Care		no	Strategy, Recommends against ratio	https://amsn.org/Practice-Resources/Position-Statements/Staffing-Standards-for-Patient-Care	Patient care assignments should be made based on the medical-surgical nurse's ability to meet needs of individual patients rather than predetermined or fixed patient-to-nurse ratios.	
(8) <i>American Psychiatric Nurses Association;</i>	APNA Position: Staffing Inpatient Psychiatric Units	2023	no	Strategy, Recommends against ratio	https://www.apna.org/news/staffing-inpatient-units/	Resist endorsing or defining any single staffing model. Limited evidence supports existing methods to evaluate staffing (e.g., nursing hours per patient day, ratio models).	Brief statement with 7 recommendations.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

<p>(9) Society of Pediatric Nurses; and</p>	<p>Safe Staffing for Pediatric Patients</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>Both</p>	<p>2022 https://www.pedsnurses.org/assets/docs/Engage/Position-Statements/SafeStaffing.2022.Final.pdf 2024 https://spn.emberclicks.net/assets/docs/Engage/Position-Statements/SPN%20Position%20Statement_Safe%20Patient%204.24.pdf</p>	<p>Update in 2024 provides staffing ratios, changing position from 2022 that "no single published ratio for nurse staffing is automatically applicable in all settings where children receive care." Ratios are just one of a multi-part list of considerations</p>	<p>4-page document with 1 page of recommendations (strategy and ratio)</p>
<p>(10) American Nephrology Nurses Association; and</p>	<p>Nurse Staffing</p>	<p>2011, updated 2025</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>Strategy</p>	<p>https://www.annanurse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/nurseStaffing.pdf</p>	<p>ANNA supports the ANA Principles of Nurse Staffing (ANA, 2020) as part of every nurse staffing model. Additional research found additional research is</p>	<p>2-page rationale document</p>

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

					https://www.annanurse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/nnjJF23Bednarski1.pdf	needed related to nurse to patient ratios	
(11) American Nursing Association	Principles for Nurse Staffing	2019	no	Strategy	https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/4850206/PNS3E_ePDF.pdf	<p>Any nursing care delivery system must provide the necessary nursing resources.</p> <p>Principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principle #1 Health Care Consumer Principle #2 Interprofessional Teams Principle #3 Workplace Culture Principle #4 Practice Environment Principle #5 Evaluation to meet each patient's individual needs and the unit's collective needs 	https://www.nursingworld.org/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/nurse-staffing/staffing-principles-infographic.pdf

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

(12) National Association of Neonatal Nurses	RN Staffing in the NICU	2021	no	Both	https://nann.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/updated-RN-nicu-staffing-ad7.pdf	It is clear that staffing rates matter. Data show that improvement in staffing improves outcomes on multiple levels. This supports stronger staffing ratios. It also is clear that minimal staffing ratios and optimal staffing ratios are different. We believe that every infant under our community of care should have staffing based on their physiological and psychosocial needs.	14-page position paper with 7 recommendations
(13) National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization	Hospice Staffing Framework	1994, updated 2024	no	Strategy	https://allianceforcareathome.org/wp-content/uploads/NHPC_O_Hospice_Staffing_Framework.pdf	"This framework differs from the previously published staffing ratios and guidelines in that recommended ranges for caseloads are not provided."	21-page document with formula and framework

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

(14) The Joint Commission	Critical Access Hospital - Staffing Standards (Standard 12)	2025	no	Strategy	https://www.jointcommission.org/en-us/accreditation/accreditation-360/prepublication-cah-and-hap-requirement-streamlined-to-reduce-burden	<p>Nurse Executive directed plans in which, among other requirements, verification that staff complete all requirements for employment and practice within their scope of practice, provision of education and training and evaluation of staff competence and evaluation of staffing during performance improvement activities, such as adequacy of staffing that is included as a factor when undesirable trends, patterns, or variations exist. Leadership teams evaluate their defined care delivery models, including innovative models such as virtual nursing, etc. as part of the planning and implementation process.</p>	152 pages, standard 12 is related to staffing
---------------------------	--	------	----	----------	---	--	---

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.

						<p>Nurse Executive directed plans in which, among other requirements, verification that staff complete all requirements for employment and practice within their scope of practice, provision of education and training and evaluation of staff competence and evaluation of staffing during performance improvement activities, such as adequacy of staffing that is included as a factor when undesirable trends, patterns, or variations exist. Leadership teams evaluate their defined care delivery models, including innovative models such as virtual nursing, etc. as part of the planning and implementation process.</p>	
	<p>Acute Care - Staffing Standards (Standard 12) (Includes behavioral health)</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>Strategy</p>	<p>https://www.jointcommission.org/en-us/accreditation/accreditation-360/prepublication-requirements-and-haps-requirements-streamlined-to-reduce-burden</p>	<p>144 pages, standard 12 is related to staffing</p>	

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.



(15) Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing	Report on a Public Health Nurse to Population Ratio	1927, updated 2008		Ratio	https://www.cphno.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ASTHOREportPublicHealthNursesPopRatio2008.pdf	Provides ratios based on whether bedside nursing is provided by PHNs in addition to public health nursing	70 pages, with specific focus in one part on PHNs
--	--	---------------------------	--	-------	---	---	---

Additional Reference Documents:

Blake, N. (2025). Specialty Guidelines for Appropriate Staffing. AACN Advanced Critical Care, 36(4), 396–400. <https://doi.org/10.4037/aacnacc2025209>

Partners for Nurse Staffing Think Tank. (2022). Nurse staffing think tank: Priority topics and recommendations. American Nurses Association. <https://www.nursingworld.org/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/nurse-staffing/nurse-staffing-think-tank-recommendation.pdf>

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to collaborate on fostering workplace conditions that support nurses to remain in a fulfilling profession.



Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.

HEARING: Friday, April 17, 2026, 1:00PM. in Room 225, State Capitol.

HCR105, HD1 Requesting the Hawaii State Center for Nursing to compile a comprehensive list of recommended safe patient staffing ratios for all nursing specialties and subspecialties across all healthcare settings, and to maintain a repository for this information.

Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for providing this opportunity for nurses to testify on this matter of critical importance to the patients we care for.

Hawai'i-American Nurses Association (Hawai'i- ANA) is the professional association for over 17,000 registered nurses who live and work in Hawai'i. Our mission is to advocate for the improvement of the healthcare system in the communities where we live and work. **We stand in strong support of this resolution** that will continue the work to ensure every patient in Hawai'i receives optimal nursing care delivered by a stable, thriving nursing workforce.

Hawai'i-ANA respectfully asks the Committee to continue to work with the stakeholders in order to continue the deep dialogue, facilitated by the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing, that supports strategy development for meeting the goal to establish enforceable safe patient staffing ratios in Hawai'i. Hawai'i-ANA thanks your committees for its commitment to the people of Hawai'i in supporting the local healthcare workforce.



Contact information for Hawai'i – American Nurses Association:

Chair of Advocacy Committee: Linda Beechinor, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
President: Denise Cohen, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC
Executive Director: Elizabeth Kahakua, RN, BSN
phone (808) 779-3001 500 Lunalilo Home Road, #27-E, Honolulu HI 96825

LATE



Terilyn Carvalho Luke
President
Michelle Apo
Vice President
Wolfgang Tarnowski
Treasurer
Madeleine Patoc
Secretary

March 29, 2026

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Senate Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

Subject: SR112/SCR119 REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE CENTER FOR NURSING TO CONDUCT A STUDY COMPILING RECOMMENDED SAFE PATIENT STAFFING RATIOS.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Honorable Senate Committee members,

On behalf of 1300 registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and healthcare workers working at Kaiser Hawai'i, I am writing this in **STRONG SUPPORT of resolutions, SR112 and SCR119**. As a frontline registered nurse for over 34 years at Kaiser and current President of HNHP for the past 4 years I have felt personally the impact and also have heard from our members of the increased pressure and staffing shortages that affect the quality of care they are able to provide to our valuable patients. Our nurses work throughout all of the major Hawaiian islands where Kaiser provides care.

Healthcare workers regularly have the difficult challenge prioritizing who, how and when our patients receive timely quality care based on the patient load they have each been assigned. Crisis situations are occurring more frequently and with less resources available to administer the high quality care response needed by our patients in the facilities. The situation of staffing shortages directly impacts the potential outcome of that patient as well as the care of the other patients on that floor whenever staff are pulled to these crisis episodes.

In medical terminology, "patient acuity refers to the severity of a hospitalized patient's illness and the level of attention or service he or she will need from professional staff. The levels of patient acuity equate to the number of hours needed for nursing staff to care for the patient." Hospital leaders have admitted that the types of patients and their severity have increased. The patients that were previously hospitalized are now seen as outpatients or sent home and given home treatment protocols to follow. So only the sickest of the sick are now in the hospitals and the increased workload is weighing heavily on the staff nurses, especially since patient to staff ratios have only increased over the past 15 years as a cost-saving measure.

Much research in the area of **safe patient staffing ratios** has been done over the years, and one study showed the correlation between lower patient to nurse staffing ratios to improved patient compliance with treatment plans, lower rates of infections, improved pain management, and fewer medication errors. This leads to better patient health, fewer readmissions, reduced financial penalties for hospitals

and improved working conditions for nurses.

Another study of 87 hospitals over a one-year span showed that if these hospitals had used four-to-one patient ratios, they could have avoided nearly 1,600 deaths. Safe patient staffing ratios save lives!

Our nurses in Hawai'i hospitals have long rung the alarm bell on concerns over hospitals putting profits before patient care as unsafe patient staffing ratios put the welfare of our patients at risk. Despite these concerns, nurses come to work putting our best selves forward knowing full well that we will not be able to spend enough time with each of our patients. Patients are waiting too long for care, preventable complications are occurring, and experienced nurses are leaving the profession far too early due to overwhelming workloads and the resulting "burnout".

I have personally been a patient and endured the long wait times for a nurse to answer my call light when I needed assistance. The wait times for pain medicine, needing to use the bathroom, IV pumps "alarming" for what seemed hours are but a few of the situations that I endured, knowing that my fellow colleagues were busy taking care of other patients. As often as I could, I insisted that my husband stay with me to assist with these and other situations since he could go out to the nursing station if the need was immediate. Otherwise, I "trained" him on how to help me including which buttons to "silence" the machines if necessary.

But I could only do this because as a nurse I could participate in directing someone to help me. Can you imagine how many others are unable to do the same because the nursing staff are too busy taking care of their patient assignments due to the high patient acuity and workload?

I have also on more than one occasion felt the need to help my family member or friend who was recovering in the hospital due to the inability of the nurses to meet the workload they had been assigned. I assisted with toileting (including placing and removing the bedpan and cleaning them up), seeking out the nurse if the vital sign monitor displayed a blood pressure or pulse that needed to have an intervention, or if my loved one complained of pain and needed repositioning or pain medications. I have more often than not had to advocate or help care for my loved one since the primary nurse was extremely busy with another patient or emergency and unable to meet my family's needs. This is a daily and frequent occurrence for many patients, not a rare example in the hospital.

I have heard more "code blue" or "rapid response team" calls in the halls of the hospital over the past 5 years than in my previous 25+ years. These overhead calls signify an "ominous" event with potentially poor clinical outcomes for the patients. They are also indicative of events that could have possibly been prevented if the nurse had been able to spend more time with their patients instead of the current maximum of 8-12 minutes per hour they currently have to provide care.

At least 15 states have safe patient-to-nurse ratio laws or regulations governing safe staffing. Hawai'i deserves no less, and I urge the implementation of a state-wide safe patient staffing standard. The resolution before your Committee will show the people and health care workers of Hawai'i the deep concern our legislators have to move in the direction of safe patient staffing standards by having the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing be the platform for the data in Hawai'i.

I wish to express my deep concern for the conditions that our nurses and healthcare workers in Hawai'i and the country are currently dealing with to save lives and care for those in need of their expertise. I implore your committees to approve resolutions SR112 and SCR 119 to support safe patient staffing here in Hawai'i.

Thank you all for your time, attention and support in moving these resolutions forward. Mahalo for your dedication to a safer, stronger healthcare system for all of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Terilyn Carvalho Luke, BSN, RN

President

Hawaii Nurses & Healthcare Professionals (HNHP)