

# THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Nurse Staffing Steering Committee: Update Bulletin

April 11, 2008

## Current Highlights

— (SHB 3123) was jointly supported by the unions, hospitals and nurse executives, and was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. It requires the establishment, where they don't already exist, of hospital level committees that would produce evidenced-based staffing plans to be forwarded as recommendations to hospital CEO's. They also agreed to work together to examine and come up with further actions to address nurse staffing in Washington, and potentially other joint proposals for action or legislation.

— A steering committee with two representatives from each of the organizations has already begun to meet monthly to carry out this agreement. See [attached list](#).

— An Education Advisory Committee, chaired by Sue Watkins of WSNA, has been established to develop training and other support for the hospital committees. Watch for announcements in the Spring and early Summer for training courses and materials.

— The Committee is also focusing on data collection. Two actions have been taken so far:

- A joint request has gone to the State Health Department to require nurse staffing information be included in the root cause analysis reports.
- A jointly approved survey has been sent to all Washington hospitals to identify what nurse sensitive data is already being collected. Once compiled, the steering committee will identify a small number of data sets that would be valuable to collect and examine in an effort to learn about nurse staffing impacts.

— The committee has asked Dr. Pamela Mitchell, a nationally known expert, who is the associate dean for research from the UW School of Nursing, to be the lead researcher in the preparation of a summary of research and prevailing policy views about the affects of nurse staffing. Other experts will be brought in and consulted as necessary.

## Introduction

*As many of you know, the Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives; SEIU Healthcare 1199NW; United Staff Nurses, UFCW 141; Washington State Nurses Association; Washington State Hospital Association signed a Memorandum of Agreement on February 4, 2008 where the Governor presided (press conference), committing to work together to address issues related to nurse staffing and other nursing care and staffing issues. A report on this work will be provided to the Governor and Legislature by November 1, 2008. As the Governor noted, this joint effort by hospitals, nurses, and nurse executives is unique in the country as a way of addressing the very difficult issues around nurse staffing. The committee aspires to develop, in a collaborative manner, innovative and practical solutions that will be a model for others.*

*This bulletin will be issued periodically to keep interested parties informed.*