

Recommendations for Safe, Effective **Medical-Surgical Nurse Staffing**



Establish Evidence-Based Minimum Safe Staffing Standards

To ensure patient safety and nurse wellbeing, a direct patient care registered nurse shall not be assigned more than five patients, as a guideline. Acuity-based adjustments should modify staffing as needed.



Implement Acuity-Based Staffing Models Using Standardized Tools

Hospitals should integrate validated acuity-based staffing tools (such as EHRS-based acuity tracking) to dynamically adjust staffing based on real-time patient complexity and staff experience.



Establish Nurse-Led Staffing Councils in Hospitals

Medical-surgical nurses should implement Nurse-Led Staffing Councils to ensure nurses, ancillary support, and their immediate managers participate in shared decision making about staffing.



Improve Ancillary & Support Staff Integration

Hospitals should invest in ancillary staff to support nurses and reduce non-nursing workload and non-nursing care tasks implemented by professional nurses.



Strengthen Legislative & Regulatory Advocacy

Advocacy at state and federal levels helps to create lasting, enforceable nurse staffing regulations.



Promote & Enable Innovation

Medical-surgical nurses should actively engage to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative staffing models, technological advances, and research.