



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Senator Velmanette Montgomery Joins Senate Colleagues in Safe Staffing Ratio Letter to Health Commissioner David Zucker

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY December 17, 2019

| ISSUE: **SAFE STAFFING**

Dear Commissioner Zucker,

We write to you to express our strong support for the consideration of minimum statewide staffing ratios for nursing homes and hospitals for healthcare workers as part of the Department of Health's current statewide study on healthcare staffing. As part of your current study to understand the magnitude and nature of staffing problems in our state and to propose appropriate responses, we believe staffing ratios should be considered as a primary solution to this problem.

As you know, Part KK of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2019 requires the Department to study how "staffing enhancements and other initiatives could be used to improve patient safety and the quality of healthcare service delivery in hospitals and nursing homes." These provisions explicitly requires the Department to consider minimum staffing levels and other staffing enhancement strategies as part of a review to support patient quality improvements. Study after study has shown that inadequate staffing in healthcare leads to increased falls, risks of infection, readmissions, and even death. Minimum staffing ratios

could help reduce injury and illness risk for healthcare workers and patients alike, improving quality care and decreasing costs associated with readmission or further illness.

Furthermore, staffing ratios are a well-tested way in which the state can regulate quality of services, as currently occurs in minimum caregiver-child ratios in daycare. It is critically important that New York State acts on behalf of patients and families to raise the standard of care and safety in our hospitals and nursing homes. We urge you to take this timely opportunity as required by Chapter 57 to review the evidence that staffing ratios improve quality care, and to determine how best to improve patient care by raising the bar for staffing levels in our healthcare facilities.