

Congressman Letter - One Page Leave Behind

NURS 412 – Ethics, Law, Economics & Health Policy

Purpose of Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to allow the student the opportunity to complete an in-depth analysis of a health issue in order to serve as an expert witness advocating for community health nursing and consumers.

Student Approach to Assignment

This assignment was a group effort and part of healthcare law and health policies. It reflects my interests and values in safe staffing in hospitals. It is essential to have a safe staff-to-patient ratio to ensure that patients get the care they need. When staff are overwhelmed with patients, they cannot care for the patient's needs, things are missed, and mistakes are made. Safe staffing also decreases the risk of fatigue, injuries, and health problems in nurses caring for patients. This makes it vital for Hospitals to ensure that they are adequately staffed. I learned that bills have been created to mandate hospitals to have safe staffing levels, and we, as nurses, should be advocating and pleading with our representatives to pass this legislation. If we can get the government involved in this issue, it will help nurses and patients. Our approach was to send a one-page letter to our local congressman to speak to the House of Representatives on our behalf.

Reason for Inclusion of this Assignment in the Portfolio

This assignment is part of my portfolio because I need to be involved in health policies and advocate for myself and all nurses with issues that can affect our careers. The assignment represents that I care for the safety and care of my patients and the safe healthcare practices of nurses. With this assignment, I also learned to collaborate with other fellow nurses to make a competing argument for our local congressman to read so that they would understand the importance of safe staffing ratios. It demonstrates our influence on changing healthcare policies both locally and nationwide.

Domain 5: Quality and Safety

o (16): Identify sources and applications of national safety and quality standards and hospital standards of practice to guide nursing practice.

Sending a letter to our local Congressman will help influence change in safe staffing levels in the hospital. This allows nurses to provide safe and proper patient care by having time to see each patient's needs. It also allows the nurse to not become overwhelmed with patients and to advocate and collaborate with the healthcare team in the hospital. The background provided in the letter provides evidence of unsafe staffing levels and their effect on patient safety. Safety in staff-to-patient ratios should be of national importance, and a quality standard should be implemented in all hospitals.

Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships

o (17): Articulate the nurse's role as a member of the interprofessional team in promoting safety and preventing errors and near misses.

We promote safe practices in hospitals by advocating for safe nurse-to-patient ratios in this letter. When nurses have too many patients, errors and mistakes happen more often because the nurse juggles many things. As a nurse, I am a valuable interprofessional team member in promoting policies to keep hospitals accountable for providing safe ratios to their patients. The evidence in this letter informs the congressman of the importance and evidence of safe nurse staffing levels in hospitals.

o (20): Initiates community partnerships to establish health promotion goals and implements strategies to meet those goals.

Reaching out to our fellow congressman helped to promote patient safety in hospitals and meet the National Patient Safety Goals for 2024 for hospitals. Safe nurse-to-patient ratios can help nurses take time to identify the correct patient, improve staff communication, use medicines safely, identify patient safety risks, and use alarms safely (see The National Patient Safety Goals of 2024). This project reflects building a partnership with local government to improve hospital staffing.

Domain 3: Population Health

o (22): Demonstrate effective collaboration and mutual accountability with relevant stakeholders.

Similarly to the above outcome and domain, this letter reflects collaborating with the local Congress to promote changes in health policies. The letter effectively communicates the importance of changing nurse-to-patient ratios to provide safe care. The congressman is not yet involved in this policy. Still, we are advocating for the Congressman to support this legislature by stressing the importance of promoting hospital patient safety. Our recommendations call for support to include the general public in reporting staffing levels and patient outcomes.

Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice

o (36): Understands the effect of legal and regulatory processes on nursing practice and health care delivery.

This assignment emphasizes the importance of nurses becoming involved in local and national government to improve the quality of nursing care and reduce nurse burnout. Nurse burnout is of national significance as it affects shortages in nursing. When hospitals are forced to have safe nurse-to-patient ratios, more nurses will continue to work in hospitals and not continue to leave bedside nursing. Regulations also help provide safe patient care because nurses have time to address their patients' needs. The letter recommends criticizing policies that replace certified nurses with unlicensed staff to lower hospital costs, which increases risks to safe patient care.