

California RNs Talk About How Safe Staffing Ratios Improve Quality of Care



“In the years before the ratios were enacted we had complete turnover of our entire RN staff twice in three years. There were never enough RNs scheduled, and we were continually fighting for two to three more nurses to be called in at the last minute. It is extremely difficult to get nurses on short notice so we were always working short staffed and our patients suffered. Nurses got frustrated and left. When they come to work now they know that they will start the shift with enough nurses scheduled to provide essential care to our patients. Now the only time nurses leave our unit is if they are moving out of the area or going back to school full time.”

Trande Phillips, RN
Pediatrics, Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek – Walnut Creek, California

“I am one of the many RNs who relocated to work in a California hospital because of ratios. I worked night shift in a neuro step-down unit in a Pittsburg, Pennsylvania hospital, where in addition to being the charge nurse, I would have nine to 10 patients. I would often only get to see my patients at the beginning and end of a shift. I resigned after one really bad night, when I felt I was seriously jeopardizing my patients’ safety and my license. I had heard really good things about CNA/NNOC and the ratios, so I packed up my family and headed to San Francisco where I happily work today, delivering quality patient care under the safe staffing law.”



James Darby, RN
Neuro ICU, University of California Medical Center – San Francisco, California



“The California safe staffing law has given nurses hope. I am a float RN which means that I work many different units; medical surgical, oncology, telemetry (where patients are on heart monitors) and RNs everywhere finally have the time to do proper nursing care, and fully evaluate each patient’s needs. We now have time to check each patient’s chart and make sure there are no treatment delays. And finally there is time to do the patient and family teaching that is essential to avoiding future complications and hospitalizations.”

Kathy Dennis, RN
Float Pool, Mercy General Hospital – Sacramento, California

“I work in a medical unit where a majority of our patients are diabetic and require lots of teaching and monitoring. Our night shift RNs used to have nine to 12 patients before the ratios were in effect. We could never keep a core nursing staff on nights. As a result of the ratio law we don’t have more than five patients which gives us the time we need to do patient teaching and has dramatically improved patient outcomes and nurse retention. Before the ratios, with too many patients to safely care for, many nurses left the profession. There was one such nurse who on was on the verge of quitting but decided to give the ratios time to work and now says nursing is her life long profession.”

Mary Bailey, RN
Medical Unit, Long Beach Memorial Hospital – Long Beach, California



A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Healthcare.