Studies by the nation’s most respected scientific and medical researchers affirm the significance of California’s RN-to-patient ratios for patient safety. A selection:


- New Jersey hospitals would have 14 percent fewer patient deaths and Pennsylvania 11 percent fewer deaths if they matched California’s 1:5 nurse-to-patient ratios in surgical units — Health Services Research Journal, August 2010.

- With improved nurse staffing levels, patient risk of hospital-acquired infections and hospital length of stay decrease, resulting in lives saved — Medical Care, Volume 47, Number 1, 2009.

- Adding just one full-time RN on staff per day resulted in 9 percent fewer hospital-related deaths in intensive care units, 16 percent fewer in surgical patients, and 6 percent fewer in medical patients — Healthcare Risk Management, February 2008.

- Each additional patient assigned to an RN is associated with a 53 percent increase in respiratory failure, 7 percent increase in the risk of hospital-acquired pneumonia, and 17 percent risk in medical complications — AHRQ Publication No. 08-0043, 2008.

- Cutting the number of patients per RN per shift in intensive care units from 3.3 patients to fewer than 1.6 reduces the odds of hospital-acquired sepsis (a severe blood infection that can lead to organ failure and death) — American Journal of Epidemiology, 2007.

- Patients hospitalized for heart attacks, congestive heart failure, and pneumonia are more likely to receive high-quality care in hospitals with better RN staffing ratios — Archives of Internal Medicine, December 11/25, 2006.

- If all hospitals increased RN staffing to match the best-staffed hospitals, more than 6,700 in-hospital patient deaths, and 60,000 adverse outcomes could be avoided — Health Affairs, January/February 2006.