



Testimony for HB 905/SB 720
Safe Staffing Act of 2025
Position: **FAV**

Dear Chair Beidle and members of the Committee:

My name is Johnine Gunsalus and I have been a nurse for 35 years in New York. As a healthcare worker who is part of a clinical staffing committee, I am testifying in support of HB 905. In 2021, New York passed the Safe Staffing Committees legislation and since then, healthcare workers have been key voices in tangible and effective solutions to staffing issues in the hospital.

Before this legislation, I was like many of the healthcare workers in Maryland and in the nation working understaffed, burnt out, disappointed by the inadequate care patients were receiving due to hospital management decisions on staffing, and left out of the discussions to address the healthcare workforce crisis. The Safe Staffing Act gives workers a transparent process to come up with strategies and solutions named by workers who know the issue personally.

Our clinical staffing committee meets monthly to report back on staffing conditions, complaints, issues, and work together to find solutions. It's not just about staffing ratios, but also about addressing issues that certain health care workers might have due to their assignments and unit protocols. The staffing committee holds all stakeholders accountable for making meaningful changes that truly improve the care we deliver.

This legislation will foster true collaboration between hospital management and healthcare workers. I feel more empowered and happier in my position by being a part of the staffing committee because I know that my perspective is considered to help create better jobs for co-workers and better care for my patients.

With Maryland's all-payer model and preparing for the AHEAD model, it is poised perfectly to adopt The Safe Staffing Act of 2025 and connect staffing to quality of care. I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 905/SB72-. I am happy to answer any questions you might have at johnine.gunsalus@1199delegate.org. Please see our staffing committee's annual report below.

Sincerely,

Johnine Gunsalus

1199 SEIU Delegate

Buffalo, New York

Attachment to Johnine Gunsalus Testimony:

Clinical Staffing Committee (CSC) Update

“New York State passed safe staffing legislation that required each hospital to develop Clinical Staffing Committees (CSC). Your Oishei Children's Hospital (OCH) Committee consists of staff from each unit/job title (registered nurses, medical assistants, unit secretaries, surgical technologists and obstetrical technologists), OCH president, chief nursing officer, nurse leaders, labor organizers and delegates, director of finance and chief operating officer.”

This was a historic event in New York State, and we are proud of the OCH CSC for working together in partnership with labor and management to come to an agreement by June 2022 for safe staffing ratios.

- CSC meets monthly. The members of the committee have open discussions daily in real time about staffing
- Staffing levels are evaluated each month including vacancies, disabilities, orients and agency
- Monthly review of any complaint forms submitted
- Formulated plan to resolve subcommittees that are working on solutions for all substantiated complaints

Accomplishments:

- This committee has worked on **increasing staff**, including MAs and unit secretaries, across the hospital to meet ratios
- Added RN positions in EMU to help decrease the use of pediatric float pool (PFP) to provide better coverage house-wide for nursing
- Added in 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. medical assistant (MA) on J10 and J11
- Changed unit secretary shift length in NICU to provide consistent coverage per agreed upon staffing plan
- Added a short shift position in PACU for MA coverage
- We have worked diligently to make sure the ancillary team members are an **equal part** of the clinical care team
- We agreed and executed on bringing the NICU POD from **8 beds down to 6**. With this, we moved two Phillips monitors back into the NICU proper
- Added unit secretary in Labor and Delivery 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- Increase in staff from 2022 to 2024
 - RN – 532.14 to **582.96**
 - MA – 65.20 to **88.59**
 - Unit Secretary – 14.47 to **16.93**
 - Surgical Technologists – 26.02 to **29.36**
 - OB technologist have stayed steady with **11.03**
 - This represents a total increase of more than **79** positions