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Subject: Opposition to House Bill 905 – Hospitals – Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans – Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)

Dear Chair Beidle and Vice Chair Hayes,

On behalf of UPMC Western Maryland, I am writing to express opposition to HB 905 which proposes clinical staffing committees requiring representation from all staff levels, developing unit-specific staffing plans, and conducting annual reviews with transparent documentation.

While we appreciate some of the amendments, I remain opposed for the following reasons. I believe this legislation, if enacted, would significantly undermine current efforts and add significant administrative burden without improving employee safety or patient care.

First, UPMC Western Maryland adheres to nationally recognized accrediting bodies such as The Joint Commission (TJC), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). We have staffing standards in place that allow us to address real-time staffing challenges and respond to fluctuating patient needs. We examine the adequacy of staffing based on the number, skill mix, patient acuity, and competency of all staff multiple times per day. We consider processes related to workflow, competency assessment, credentialing, supervision of staff, orientation, training, and education in addition to evaluating each unit. Requiring a pre-determined standing committee of staff to be responsible for developing and posting a staffing plan each time there is any change is not feasible given the real-time changes and demands of clinical settings.

Second, given how dietary and EVS staff are not assigned to unit staffing, participate in bed meetings or staffing calls, these employees would be tasked with undue hardship in determining staff decisions and making judgements on the validity of patient or staff complaints. Their expertise does not include the determination of patient acuity or around evidenced-based nursing which informs our staffing approach.

Third, and most importantly, UPMC Western Maryland is committed to shared governance. Employee feedback, collected through daily leader rounding, staff huddles, town halls, and the MyVoice survey, drives positive change at UPMC Western Maryland.

Through regular town halls, increased leadership update messages to employees, and a revitalized senior leader rounding program, the UPMC Western Maryland clinical leadership team is committed to robust, two-way communication with staff.

Additionally, the following actions demonstrate our commitment, offering opportunities to discuss acuity, patient safety concerns, staffing concerns while allowing us to adapt to the staff/patient needs.

- Culture of safety survey
- Minimum twice daily staffing/bed meetings
- Daily safety huddle

- Risk master system – any staff can submit a complaint. These are followed up and reviewed for opportunities to improve.

I believe this legislation, if enacted, would significantly undermine current efforts and add significant administrative burden without improving employee safety or patient care. I respectfully request that you oppose HB 905 and support policies that strengthen hospital staffing committees.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Chrissy Lechliter,
Chief Nursing Officer
VP Patient Care Services