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H.103

Introduced by Representatives Page of Newport City, Cordes of Lincoln, and
Labor of Morgan

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Health; facilities; staffing ratios

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
Department of Health to report on staff-to-patient ratios in the State's health
care facilities.

An act relating to staff-to-patient ratios

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds:

(1) Nurses are often responsible for taking care of multiple patients
simultaneously and must be able to communicate effectively with each patient
to provide the best possible care. By creating a system where all nurses have a
reasonable number of patients to care for, hospitals can ensure that every
patient receives high-quality care.

(2) Ensuring a reasonable nurse-to-patient ratio can reduce staff
turnover, which can also help to keep health care costs down.

1 (3) A 2020 study of New York hospitals found if the hospitals were
2 staffed at 1 nurse per 4 patients it would have saved an estimated \$720 million,
3 as well as 4,370 patients' lives, over the two-year study period. The study
4 found that each additional patient per nurse, for surgical and medical patients,
5 respectively, was associated with higher odds of in-hospital mortality, longer
6 lengths of stay, and higher odds of 30-day readmission.

7 (4) According to a 2014 study by the International Archives of
8 Occupational and Environmental Health, the staff-to-patient ratio law passed in
9 California was effective in reducing occupational injury and illness rates for
10 both registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

11 Sec. 2. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH; STAFF-TO-PATIENT RATIOS;

12 REPORT

13 On or before January 15, 2024, the Department of Health shall report to the
14 House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and
15 Welfare on the sufficiency of staff-to-patient ratios currently employed in
16 Vermont's health care facilities and a recommendation on whether any areas of
17 care in health care facilities, including trauma care, psychiatric care, intensive
18 care, and surgical care, should have staff-to-patient ratios mandated in statute
19 or in rule. In making its recommendation, the Department shall consider the
20 policies, mandates, and strategies employed by other states to improve staff-to-

1 patient ratios and the input or recommendations of relevant state and national
2 stakeholders, including front-line workers.

3 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.