

April 1, 2014

Please include the following as a written statement for Law Amendments:

In March 2012 my son decided to unexpectedly arrive ten weeks early. We spent two months at the IWK in the NICU. While in NICU 1, there is one nurse for one baby. At the time, it boggled my mind that my little 2.5lb boy had one nurse designated to watch HIM and him alone. But my son, and all of the other children in NICU1, were in for the fight of their lives. Some of the little fighters were not so lucky. But those who were lucky enough to move on to NICU 2 did so because of the constant care; their nurse literally watched over them and fought for them just as hard (if not harder) than I did as a mom.

As we progressed through the NICU, ratios climbed. Patients became less critical and with that came increased workloads. As parents, we felt the shift immediately. One nurse was now responsible for two or three babies. When their colleague went on a break, they were responsible for double that. It was during these regular breaks that my heart would race and I would be on high alert. Bells and alarms would sound simultaneously. Babies would have apneas and need stimulation to restart their breathing. I've seen babies turn blue. Regular medications needed to be dispensed. Beds needed to be changed. Babies needed to be changed, fed every three hours, bathed. Not to mention the constant barrage of questions from worried parents. And I'm certain that's just the tip of the iceberg. I've seen nurses juggle it all with expert skill and composure.

While I appreciate the IWK nurses are not affected (today!) by this strike, the same sentiment extends to all corners of healthcare - I cannot fathom ratios being compromised. If my son did not have the constant care he received, he literally might not be here. I know the same holds true for the remainder of the hospital and care we all receive. This isn't a casino where the guest service agent is responsible for helping to make your stay more enjoyable. These are nurses and care that is keeping the people in our lives ALIVE. Patient ratios are worth standing up for; they are quite literally the difference between life and death. I commend the NSGEU for being outspoken advocates for patient safety and demanding an adequate standard of care. Taking away their right to collective bargaining to advocate for that safety is certainly not appropriate or cooperative action.

Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,  
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