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2 Chairman Phil Mendelson

Councilmember Yvette Alexander

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6 Councilmember Marion Barry

Councilmember Anita Bonds

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10 Councilmember Jack Evans

Councilmember Jim Graham

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14 Councilmember David Grosso

Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie

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18 Councilmember Vincent Orange

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22 A BILL
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26 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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31 Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmembers Yvette Alexander, Marion Barry, Anita
32 Bonds, Jack Evans, Jim Graham, David Grosso, Kenyan McDuffie, and Vincent Orange
33 introduced the following bill, which was referred to the Committee on _____.
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35 To require an acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital to submit to the Department of
36 Health a staffing plan that provides sufficient, appropriately qualified nursing staff in
37 each unit within the facility; establish and implement an acuity system for addressing
38 fluctuations in actual patient acuity levels and nursing care requirements requiring
39 increased staffing levels; require the Department of Health to set minimal levels of nurse
40 staffing and registered nurse staff ratios for schools.

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42 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this
43 act may be cited as the “Patient Protection Act of 2013.”

1 Sec. 2. Findings

2 The Council of the District of Columbia finds that:

3 (1) Health care services are becoming more complex and it is increasingly difficult for
4 patients to access integrated services. Competent, safe, therapeutic and effective patient care is
5 jeopardized because of staffing changes implemented in response to market-driven managed
6 care.

7 (2) The Government of the District of Columbia has a substantial interest in assuring that
8 acute care general hospitals and psychiatric hospitals retain sufficient nursing staff so as to
9 promote optimal and safe health care outcomes.

10 (3) Acute care general hospitals and psychiatric hospitals in the District of Columbia
11 have inadequate staffing of registered nurses to protect the well-being and health of patients.

12 (4) To ensure the health and welfare of District of Columbia citizens, mandatory acute
13 care general hospital and psychiatric hospital professional nursing practice standards and
14 professional practice protections must be established to assure that hospital nursing care is
15 provided in the exclusive interests of patients. Direct care registered nurses have a fiduciary duty
16 to assigned patients and necessary duty and right of patient advocacy and collective patient
17 advocacy to satisfy professional fiduciary obligations.

18 (5) To ensure effective protection of patients in acute care general hospital and
19 psychiatric hospital settings, it is essential that qualified direct care registered nurses be
20 accessible and available to meet the individual needs of the patients at all times.

1 (6) The basic principles of staffing in acute care general hospital and psychiatric hospital
2 settings should be based on the individual patient’s care needs, the severity of condition, services
3 needed, and the complexity surrounding those services. Clinical research has demonstrated that
4 there is a direct correlation between nurse staffing levels and patient outcomes. Current unsafe
5 hospital direct care registered nurse staffing practices has resulted in adverse patient outcomes.
6 Mandating adoption of uniform, minimum, numerical and specific registered nurse-to-patient
7 staffing ratios by licensed acute care general hospitals is necessary for competent, safe,
8 therapeutic and effective professional nursing care and for retention and recruitment of qualified
9 direct care registered nurses.

10 (7) Direct care registered nurses must be able to advocate for their patients without fear
11 of retaliation from their employer. Whistle blower protections that encourage registered nurses
12 and patients to notify government and private accreditation entities of suspected unsafe patient
13 conditions, including protection against retaliation for refusing unsafe patient care assignments
14 by competent registered nurse staff, will greatly enhance the health, welfare and safety of
15 patients.

16 (8) Direct care registered nurses have an irrevocable duty and right to advocate on behalf
17 of their patient's interest and this duty, and that right shall not be encumbered.

18 (9) Acute care general hospitals and psychiatric hospitals continue to utilize mandatory
19 overtime as a staffing methodology despite evidence that job dissatisfaction and increased
20 overtime contribute to the departure of nurses from their chosen profession.

21 (10) The practice of mandatory overtime contributes to medical errors and other
22 consequences that compromise patient safety.

1 (11) Limitations on the use of mandatory overtime will ensure that acute care general
2 hospitals and psychiatric hospitals in the District of Columbia operate in a manner that
3 safeguards public safety, guarantees the delivery of quality health care services and facilitates the
4 retention and recruitment of nurses.

5 Sec. 3. Definitions

6 (1) “General acute care hospital” means a health facility having a duly constituted
7 governing body with overall administrative and professional responsibility and an organized
8 medical staff that provides 24-hour inpatient care, including the following basic services:
9 medical, nursing, surgical, anesthesia, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, and dietary services.

10 (2) “Psychiatric hospital” means an inpatient psychiatric facility for individuals with
11 serious and persistent mental illness who need intensive inpatient care to support their recovery

12 (3) “Medication/somatic treatment services” means medical interventions including:
13 physical examinations; prescription, supervision or administration of mental health-related
14 medications; monitoring and interpreting results of laboratory diagnostic procedures related to
15 mental health-related medications; medical interventions needed for effective mental health
16 treatment provided as either an individual or group intervention; monitoring the side effects and
17 interactions of medications and the adverse reactions an individual may experience; and
18 providing education and direction for symptom and medication self-management.

19 (4) “Acuity-Based Patient Classification System” or “acuity system” means an
20 established measurement tool that:

21 (A) Predicts registered nursing care requirements for individual patients based on
22 the severity of patient illness, the need for specialized equipment and technology, the intensity of
23 required nursing interventions and the complexity of clinical nursing judgment required to

1 design, implement and evaluate the patient's nursing care plan consistent with professional
2 standards, the ability for self-care, including motor, sensory and cognitive deficits, and the need
3 for advocacy intervention;

4 (B) Details the amount of nursing care needed, the additional number of direct
5 care registered nurses and other licensed and unlicensed nursing staff the acute care general
6 hospital or psychiatric hospital must assign, based on the independent professional judgment of
7 the direct care registered nurse, to meet the individual patient needs at all times; and Is stated in
8 terms that can be readily used and understood by direct care nursing staff.

9 (5) "Competence" means the ability of the direct care registered nurse to act and integrate
10 the knowledge, skills, abilities, independent professional judgment that underpin safe,
11 therapeutic and effective patient care.

12 (6) Current documented, demonstrated and validated competency is required for all
13 direct care registered nurses and must be determined based on the satisfactory performance of:

14 (A) The statutorily recognized duties and responsibilities of the registered nurses,
15 as set forth in Chapter 54 Title 22 – Registered Nurses, and regulations promulgated there
16 under; and

17 (B) The standards required under sections 44-1933.3 and 44-1933. 4 which are
18 specific to each hospital unit.

19 (7) "Declared state of emergency" means an officially designated state of emergency
20 which has been declared by a federal or District of Columbia government official who has the
21 authority to declare that the District of Columbia is in a state of emergency. The term does not
22 include a state of emergency that results from a labor dispute in the health care industry.

1 (8) “Direct Care Registered Nurse or Direct Care Professional Nurse” means a registered
2 nurse currently licensed by the District of Columbia Board of Nursing to engage in “professional
3 nursing” under Chapter 54 of Title 22- Registered Nurses with documented clinical
4 “competence” as defined herein, who has accepted a direct, hands-on patient care assignment to
5 implement medical and nursing regimens and provide related “clinical supervision” of patient
6 care while exercising independent professional judgment at all times in the exclusive interest of
7 the patient.

8 (9) “Hospital unit or clinical patient care area” means an intensive care/critical care unit,
9 burn unit, labor and delivery room, antepartum and postpartum, newborn nursery, post-
10 anesthesia service area, emergency room, operating room, pediatric unit, step-down/intermediate
11 care unit, specialty care unit, telemetry unit, general medical/surgical care unit, psychiatric unit,
12 or rehabilitation unit.

13 (10) “Critical care unit” or “intensive care unit” means a nursing unit of an acute care
14 general hospital that is established to safeguard and protect patients whose severity of medical
15 conditions require continuous monitoring and complex interventions by direct care registered
16 nurses and whose restorative measures, level of nursing intensity requires intensive care through
17 direct observation by the direct care registered nurse, complex monitoring, intensive intricate
18 assessment, evaluation, specialized rapid intervention, and education/teaching of the patient, the
19 patient’s family, or other representatives by a competent and experienced direct care registered
20 nurse which includes: an intensive care unit, a burn center, a coronary care unit, or an acute
21 respiratory unit.

22 (11) “Step down/intermediate intensive care unit” is defined as a unit established to
23 safeguard and protect patients whose severity of illness, including all co-morbidities, restorative

1 measures and level of nursing intensity requires intermediate intensive care through direct
2 observation by the direct care registered nurse, monitoring, multiple assessments, specialized
3 interventions, evaluations, and education/teaching of the patient’s family, or other
4 representatives by a competent and experienced direct care registered nurse, and provide care to
5 patients with moderate or potentially severe physiologic instability requiring technical support
6 but not necessarily artificial life support. “Artificial life support” is defined as a system that uses
7 medical technology to aid, support, or replace a vital function of the body that has been seriously
8 damaged. “Technical support” is defined as specialized equipment and/or direct care registered
9 nurses providing for invasive monitoring, telemetry, and mechanical ventilation, for the
10 immediate amelioration or remediation of severe pathology for those patients requiring less care
11 than intensive care, but more than that which is required from medical/surgical care.

12 (12) “Medical/surgical unit” is a unit established to safeguard and protect patients whose
13 severity of illness, including all co-morbidities, restorative measures and level of nursing
14 intensity requires continuous care through direct observation by the direct care registered nurse,
15 monitoring, multiple assessments, specialized interventions, evaluations, and education/teaching
16 of the patient’s family, or other representatives by a competent and experienced direct care
17 registered nurse. These units may include patients requiring less than-intensive care or step-down
18 care, and patients receiving 24 hour inpatient general medical care, post-surgical care, or both
19 general medical and post-surgical care; and may include mixed patient populations of diverse
20 diagnoses and diverse age groups excluding pediatric patients.

21 (13) “Telemetry unit” is defined as a unit established to safeguard and protect patients
22 whose severity of illness, including all co-morbidities, restorative measures and level of nursing
23 intensity requires intermediate intensive care through direct observation by the direct care

1 registered nurse, monitoring, multiple assessments, specialized interventions, evaluations, and
2 education/teaching of the patient’s family, or other representatives by a competent and
3 experienced direct care registered nurse, and is also designated for the electronic monitoring,
4 recording, retrieval, and display of cardiac electrical signals.

5 (14) “Specialty care unit” is a unit which is established to safeguard and protect patients
6 whose severity of illness, including all co-morbidities, restorative measures and level of nursing
7 intensity requires continuous care through direct observation by the direct care registered nurse,
8 monitoring, multiple assessments, specialized interventions, evaluations, and education/teaching
9 of the patient’s family, or other representatives by a competent and experienced direct care
10 registered nurse, and provides intensity of care for a specific medical condition or a specific
11 patient population; is more comprehensive for the specific condition or disease process than that
12 which is required on medical/surgical units, and is not otherwise covered by the definitions in
13 this section.

14 (15) “Staffing plan” means a written plan that establishes the minimum specific number
15 of direct care registered nurses required to be present in each unit for each shift to ensure safe
16 patient care.

17 **Sec. 4. Staff Ratio Regulations**

18 (a) Within one year after the effective date of this Act, an acute care general hospital or
19 psychiatric hospital shall submit to the Department of Health a staffing plan as provided under
20 this section. Each acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital is responsible for the
21 development and implementation of a written staffing plan that provides sufficient, appropriately
22 qualified nursing staff in each unit at all times within the facility. In addition to the direct care
23 registered nurse-ratios requirements of subsection 4 (d), each acute care general hospital or

1 psychiatric hospital shall assign additional nursing staff, such as, licensed practical nurses,
2 licensed psychiatric technicians and certified nursing assistants, through the implementation of
3 a valid Patient Classification System for determining nursing care needs of individual patients
4 that reflects the assessment, made by the assigned direct care registered nurse of patient nursing
5 care requirements and provides for shift-by-shift staffing based on those requirements. The ratios
6 specified in subsection 4(d) shall constitute the minimum number of registered nurses who shall
7 be assigned to direct patient care.

8 (b)(1) To assist in the development of a staffing plan, the acute care general hospital or
9 psychiatric hospital shall establish a staffing committee for each unit and at least one half of the
10 members shall be registered professional nurses who are direct care providers in that unit. If the
11 nurses in the acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital are represented by a labor
12 organization, the collective bargaining representative shall designate the nurses from within each
13 unit to serve on the staffing committee for that unit. Participation on the staffing committee shall
14 be considered a part of the nurse's regularly scheduled workweek. An acute care general hospital
15 or psychiatric hospital shall not retaliate against a nurse who participates on the staffing
16 committee. The staffing committee shall establish a staffing strategy for that unit if the patients'
17 needs within that unit for a shift exceed the required minimum direct care registered professional
18 nurse-to-patient ratios set forth under subsection (d).

19 (2) Within two years after the effective date of this Act, each acute care general
20 hospital or psychiatric hospital shall have established and implemented an acuity system for
21 addressing fluctuations in actual patient acuity levels and nursing care requirements requiring
22 increased staffing levels above the minimums set forth under subsection (d). The assessment tool

1 shall be used annually to review the accuracy of the acuity system established under this
2 subsection.

3 (c) To assist in the development of an acuity system, the acute care general hospital or
4 psychiatric hospital shall establish an acuity committee for each unit and at least one-half of the
5 members shall be registered professional nurses who are direct care providers in that unit. If the
6 nurses in the acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital are represented by a labor
7 organization, the collective bargaining representative shall designate the nurses from within each
8 unit to serve on the acuity committee for that unit. Participation on the acuity committee shall be
9 considered a part of the nurse's regularly scheduled workweek. An acute care general hospital or
10 psychiatric hospital shall not retaliate against a nurse who participates on the acuity committee.

11 (d) Within four years after the effective date of this Act, an acute care general or
12 psychiatric hospital's staffing plan shall incorporate, at a minimum, the following direct care
13 registered professional nurse-to-patient ratios which shall be applicable for each of the
14 corresponding units:

15 (1) Critical Care – Adult/Pediatric/Neonatal: 1 to 2.

16 (2) Operating Room: 1 to 1.

17 (3) Labor and Delivery:

18 (A) During 2d and 3d stages of labor: 1 to 1.

19 (B) During the 1st stage of labor: 1 to 2.

20 (C) Intermediate care newborn nursery: 1 to 3.

21 (D) Inpatient antepartum: 1 to 1.

22 (E) Postpartum mother baby couplet: 1 to 4.

23 (F) Postpartum or well-baby care: 1 to 4.

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- (4) Post-anesthesia care unit: 1 to 2.
- (5) Emergency Department:
 - (A) Non-trauma or noncritical care: 1 to 4.
 - (B) Trauma or critical care patient: 1 to 1.
 - (C) Two RNs for triage.
- (6) Stepdown: 1 to 3.
- (7) Telemetry: 1 to 4.
- (8) Medical/Surgical: 1 to 4.
- (9) Pediatrics: 1 to 4.
- (10) Behavioral Health: 1 to 6.
- (11) Rehabilitation care: 1 to 5.
- (12) Antepartum/Postpartum Unit (Non-Labor & Delivery)
 - (A) Antepartum: 1 to 2.
 - (B) Postpartum: 1 to 3.

(e) Except as otherwise provided under this subsection, in computing the registered professional nurse-to-patient ratio required under subsection (d), the acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall not include a registered professional nurse who is not assigned to provide direct patient care in that unit or who is not oriented, qualified and competent to provide safe patient care in that unit. In the event of a declared state of emergency, an acute care general hospital may include a staff member who is a registered professional nurse who is not normally used in computing the ratio requirement because the staff member performs primarily administrative functions if the staff member provides direct patient care during the unforeseeable declared state of emergency, but shall be included in the computation only for the duration of the

1 declared state of emergency. In computing the registered professional nurse-to-patient ratio for
2 the operating room, the acute care general hospital shall not include a circulating RN or a first
3 assistant RN.

4 (f) The registered professional nurse-to-patient ratio established for each unit under
5 subsection (d) does not limit, reduce or otherwise affect the need for other licensed or unlicensed
6 health care professionals, assistants or support personnel necessary to provide safe patient care
7 within the unit.

8 (g) The acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall post its staffing plan for
9 each unit in a conspicuous place within the unit for public review. Upon request, the acute care
10 general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall provide copies of the staffing plan that are filed with
11 the Department of Health to the public. The hospital shall make available for each member of the
12 nursing staff a copy of the staffing plan for his or her unit, including the number of direct care
13 registered professional nurses required for each shift and the names of those registered
14 professional nurses assigned and present during each shift. A staffing plan developed under this
15 section and the minimum staffing ratios established under this section are minimums and shall be
16 increased as needed to provide safe patient care as determined by the acute care general or
17 psychiatric hospital's acuity system or assessment tool. An acute care general hospital or
18 psychiatric hospital shall not use mandatory overtime as a staffing strategy in the delivery of safe
19 patient care except in the event of a declared state of emergency.

20 (h) In addition to any staffing requirements in health care facilities otherwise provided by
21 law or regulation, the Director of the Department of Health shall adopt regulations that provide,
22 at a minimum, for the following registered nurse staff ratios for schools:

23 (1) Senior High School 1 to 900 (with a medical technician)

1 (2) Middle School 1 to 750 (with or without a medical technician)

2 (3) Elementary School 1 to 700 (with or without a medical technician)

3 (i) Prohibition Against Averaging.

4 An acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall not average the number of
5 patients and the total number of direct care registered nurses assigned to patients in a clinical unit
6 during any one shift or over any period of time for purposes of meeting the requirements under
7 section 3 (d).

8 (j) Patients shall only be cared for on units or clinical patient care areas where the level of
9 intensity, type of care, and direct care registered nurse-to-patient ratios meet the individual
10 requirements and needs of each patient. The use of patient acuity-adjustable units is strictly
11 prohibited.

12 (k) These regulations shall require acute care general hospitals and psychiatric hospitals
13 to meet the staffing requirements in this section by maintaining or increasing the current number
14 of registered professional nurses in an acute care general hospital and not replacing registered
15 professional nurses with licensed practical nurses or unlicensed professional care givers.

16 Sec. 5. Prohibition on Overtime

17 (a) No registered nurse of an acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital may be
18 required to work overtime. Attempts to compel or force registered nurses to work overtime are
19 contrary to public policy, and any such requirement contained in a contract, agreement, or
20 understanding is void.

21 (b) The acceptance by any registered nurse of overtime is strictly voluntary, and the

1 refusal of a registered nurse to accept such overtime work is not grounds for discrimination,
2 dismissal, discharge, or any other penalty, threat of reports for discipline, or employment
3 decision adverse to the employee.

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5 (c) This section does not apply to overtime work that occurs:

6 (1) Because of a declared state of emergency;

7 (2) Because of prescheduled on-call time;

8 (3) When the employer documents that the employer has used reasonable efforts
9 to obtain staffing. An employer has not used reasonable efforts if overtime work is used to fill
10 vacancies resulting from chronic staff shortages; or

11 (4) When an employee is required to work overtime to complete a patient care
12 procedure already in progress where the absence of the employee could have an adverse effect
13 on the patient.

14 (d) This section may not be construed to prohibit a registered nurse from voluntarily
15 agreeing to work more than the number of scheduled hours provided in this section.

16 (e) A registered nurse may not be disciplined for refusing to work more than 12
17 consecutive hours except where the registered nurse refuses to work mandatory overtime in the
18 case of circumstance declared state of emergency or when overtime is required as a last resort to
19 ensure patient safety. Any registered nurse who is required to work more than 12 consecutive
20 hours, as permitted by this subsection, must be allowed at least 12 consecutive hours of off-duty
21 time immediately following the worked overtime. This subsection does not apply to overtime for
22 performance of services in response to an emergency declared by the Mayor under the laws of
23 the District of Columbia.

1 Sec. 6. Compliance.

2 (a) If an acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital fails to submit an annual
3 staffing plan as required in Section 3(a) of this Act or does not meet the required staffing plan
4 established for each unit during each shift, as adjusted in accordance with the acute care general
5 or psychiatric hospital's acuity system or assessment tool to maintain safe patient care, the acute
6 care general or psychiatric hospital is in violation of this Act. Each violation shall be reported to
7 the Department of Health by the acute care general or psychiatric hospital's designated
8 representative.

9 (b) Any person who fails to comply with any of the provisions of this act shall be subject
10 to a fine not to exceed \$25,000 for each violation. Each day of the violation shall constitute a
11 separate violation and the penalties prescribed shall be applicable to each separate violation
12 unless otherwise indicated. An acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital licensed
13 pursuant to D.C. Code § 7-731, that is in violation of the staffing requirements of this Act shall
14 be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$25,000 for each day the hospital or facility is in
15 violation.

16 (c) The Council shall direct the District of Columbia Department of Public Health to
17 amend Chapter 20, Section 2005 of Title 22, District of Columbia Municipal Regulations to
18 include provisions for monitoring the enforcement of this Act.

19 Sec. 7. Whistleblower and Patient Protections:

20 (a) A registered nurse shall have the right to act as the patient's advocate, as
21 circumstances require, by initiating action to improve health care or to change decisions or
22 activities which, in the professional judgment of the nurse, are against the interests and wishes of

1 the patient; and giving the patient an opportunity to make informed decisions about health care
2 before it is provided.

3 (b) A registered nurse may refuse to accept an assignment as a nurse in a health care
4 facility if the assignment would violate subsection (a) of this section, or the nurse is not prepared
5 by education, training, or experience to fulfill the assignment with out compromising the safety
6 of any patient or jeopardizing the license of the registered nurse.

7 (c)(1) No health care facility shall discharge, discriminate, or retaliate in any manner
8 with respect to any aspect of employment, including discharge, promotion, compensation, or
9 terms, conditions, or privileges of employment against a nurse based on the nurse's refusal of a
10 work assignment pursuant to this section.

11 (2) No health care facility shall file a complaint or a report against a registered
12 nurse with the appropriate District professional disciplinary Council or Designee because of the
13 nurse's refusal of a work assignment pursuant to this section.

14 (d) Any registered nurse who has been discharged, discriminated against, retaliated
15 against or against whom a complaint has been filed in violation of this act may bring a cause of
16 action in the District of Columbia Superior Court. A registered nurse who prevails on the cause
17 of action shall be entitled to one or more of the following:

18 (1) Reinstatement.

19 (2) Reimbursement of lost wages, compensation, and benefits.

20 (3) Attorneys' fees.

21 (4) Court costs.

22 (5) Other damages.

1 (e) A registered nurse, patient, or other individual may file a complaint with the Council
2 or Designee against a health care facility that violates the provisions of this Act. For any
3 complaint filed, the Council or Designee shall:

4 (1) receive and investigate the complaint;

5 (2) determine whether a violation of this title as alleged in the complaint has
6 occurred; and

7 (3) if such a violation has occurred, issue an order that the complaining nurse or
8 individual shall not suffer any retaliation described in this section.

9 (f) Toll-Free Telephone Number.

10 The Council or Designee shall provide for the establishment of a toll-free telephone
11 hotline to provide information regarding the requirements under Act and to receive reports of
12 violations of such section.

13 (2) A health care facility shall provide each patient admitted to the hospital for in
14 patient care with the hotline described in subsection (a) above, and shall give notice to each
15 patient that such hotline may be used to report inadequate staffing or care.

16 (g)(1) An acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall not discriminate or
17 retaliate in any manner against any patient, employee, or contract employee of the hospital, or
18 any other individual, on the basis that such individual, in good faith, individually or in
19 conjunction with another person or persons, has presented a grievance or complaint, or has
20 initiated or cooperated in any investigation or proceeding of any governmental entity, regulatory
21 Council or Designee, or private accreditation body, made a civil claim or demand, or filed an
22 action relating to the care, services, or conditions of the hospital or of any affiliated or related
23 facilities.

1 (2) For purposes of this subsection, an individual shall be deemed to be acting in
2 good faith if the individual reasonably believes:

3 (A) the information reported or disclosed is true; and

4 (B) a violation of this title has occurred or may occur.

5 (g) Prohibition on Interference with Rights.

6 (1) It shall be unlawful for any hospital to:

7 (A) interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise, or attempt to exercise, by
8 any person of any right provided or protected under this title; or

9 (B) coerce or intimidate any person regarding the exercise or attempt to
10 exercise such right.

11 (2) It shall be unlawful for any hospital to discriminate or retaliate against any
12 person for opposing any hospital policy, practice, or actions which are alleged to violate, breach,
13 or fail to comply with any provision of this title.

14 (3) An acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital (or an individual
15 representing an acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital) shall not make, adopt, or
16 enforce any rule, regulation, policy, or practice which in any manner directly or indirectly
17 prohibits, impedes, or discourages a direct care registered nurse from, or intimidates, coerces, or
18 induces a direct care registered nurse regarding, engaging in free speech activities or disclosing
19 information as provided under this act.

20 (4) An acute care general hospital or a psychiatric hospital (or an individual
21 representing an acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital) shall not in any way interfere
22 with the rights of nurses to organize, bargain collectively, and engage in concerted activity under
23 section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 157).

1 (5) An acute care general hospital or psychiatric hospital shall post in an
2 appropriate location in each unit a conspicuous notice in a form specified by the Council or
3 Designee that:

4 (A) explains the rights of nurses, patients, and other individuals under this
5 section;

6 (B) includes a statement that a nurse, patient, or other individual may file a
7 complaint with the Council or Designee against an acute care general or psychiatric hospital that
8 violates the provisions of this title; and

9 (C) provides instructions on how to file a complaint under section.

10 Sec. 8: Training Registered Professional Nurses

11 (a) Within one year after the effective date of this Act, the District of Columbia
12 Department of Health shall submit a detailed plan, working with the Department of Nursing and
13 Allied Health, Community College of the University of the District of Columbia, (UDC-CC), to
14 increase the number of registered professional nurses in the District of Columbia by increasing
15 the number of students graduating from the Associate in Applied Science (AASN) Degree in
16 Nursing program by at least fifty per cent (50%) annually within two years. The Department of
17 Health, the Workforce Investment Council, and other relevant District of Columbia government
18 agencies shall seek federal funds which may be available through the Workforce Investment Act,
19 the Affordable Care Act, or other monies, to develop nurse training and development. The plan
20 may include strategies or incentives to encourage District residents to apply for and be admitted
21 to this program. The plan should include encouragement for acute care general hospitals or
22 psychiatric hospitals located in the District of Columbia to cooperate with and/or support the
23 training of registered professional nurses.

1 Sec. 9. Fiscal impact statement.

2 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
3 impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act,
4 approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02).

5 Sec. 4. Effective date

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7 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
8 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as
9 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
10 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02), and publication in the District of Columbia
11 Register.