

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2021  
4

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 611

5 By: Senator D. Wallace  
6

## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO CREATE THE TASK FORCE ON ACUITY-BASED CARE;  
9 TO RECOMMEND PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES TO CREATE  
10 STANDARDIZATION AND CONSISTENCY IN NURSE STAFFING  
11 WITHIN HOSPITALS AND REHABILITATION AND LONG-TERM  
12 CARE FACILITIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

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16 TO CREATE THE TASK FORCE ON ACUITY-BASED  
17 CARE; AND TO RECOMMEND PROTOCOLS AND  
18 PROCEDURES TO CREATE STANDARDIZATION AND  
19 CONSISTENCY IN NURSE STAFFING WITHIN  
20 HOSPITALS AND REHABILITATION AND LONG-  
21 TERM CARE FACILITIES.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Task Force on Acuity-  
27 Based Care – Creation – Membership – Duties.

28 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

29 (1) Nursing staff shortages brought about by cost-cutting  
30 decisions, an aging population, increased patient complexity and need, and an  
31 aging workforce place stress on working conditions for nurses and affect  
32 patient care and overall outcomes;

33 (2) An increasing body of evidence shows appropriate nurse  
34 staffing contributes to improved patient outcomes and greater satisfaction  
35 for both patients and nursing staff;

36 (3) The need remains for appropriate nurse staffing in all



1 healthcare settings;

2 (4) Appropriate nurse staffing is essential to both the nursing  
3 profession and to the overall healthcare system;

4 (5) Nurse staffing affects the ability of all nurses to deliver  
5 safe, quality care in all practice settings;

6 (6) Research reveals that optimizing nurse staffing practices  
7 and policies can improve nursing satisfaction, prevent burnout, and keep  
8 nurses in a safe workplace so that they can provide better health care for  
9 all patients; and

10 (7) A study of possible solutions to the issues related to  
11 inconsistent or, in some cases, inadequate nurse staffing in all hospitals,  
12 rehabilitation facilities, and long-term care facilities is necessary.

13 (b) There is created the Task Force on Acuity-Based Care to study  
14 nurse staffing in all hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and long-term  
15 care facilities.

16 (c) The task force shall consist of the following members:

17 (1) A member of the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare,  
18 and Labor appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

19 (2) A member of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare,  
20 and Labor appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

21 (3) A representative of the Department of Health;

22 (4) A representative of the Department of Human Services;

23 (5) A representative of the Arkansas Hospital Association, Inc.;

24 (6) A representative of the Arkansas Nurses Association;

25 (7) A representative of the Arkansas State Board of Nursing;

26 (8) A representative of the Arkansas Health Care Association;

27 (9) A representative of the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership;

28 (10) A representative of the Arkansas Minority Health

29 Commission;

30 (11) A representative of the Arkansas Center for Nursing, Inc.;

31 (12) A representative of the Arkansas Organization of Nurse

32 Executives;

33 (13) A representative of the Arkansas Chapter of the Alzheimer's  
34 Association; and

35 (14) A representative of the Arkansas State Office of AARP, Inc.

36 (d) If a vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be filled

1 by the same process as the original appointment.

2 (e) The legislative members of the task force shall be paid per diem  
3 and mileage as authorized by law for attendance at meetings of interim  
4 committees of the General Assembly.

5 (f)(1) The Director of the Department of Health shall call the first  
6 meeting of the task force within sixty (60) days of the effective date of  
7 this act and shall serve as chair at the first meeting.

8 (2) At the first meeting of the task force, the members of the  
9 task force shall elect from the task force's membership a chair or cochair  
10 and other officers as needed for the transaction of its business.

11 (3)(A) The task force shall meet at the Department of Health.

12 (B) Meetings of the task force shall be held at least  
13 one (1) time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of  
14 the chair or cochair.

15 (4) The task force shall establish rules and procedures for  
16 conducting its business.

17 (5)(A) A majority of the members of the task force shall  
18 constitute a quorum for transacting business of the task force.

19 (B) An affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum present  
20 shall be required for the passage of a motion or other task force action.

21 (6) The Department of Health shall provide staff, meeting space,  
22 and materials for the task force.

23 (g)(1) The purpose of the task force is to examine and identify areas  
24 of needed reform with regard to the protocol, procedures, and mechanisms  
25 related to current nurse staffing practices in all hospitals, rehabilitation  
26 facilities, and long-term care facilities.

27 (2) To achieve this purpose, the task force shall:

28 (A) Study practices and protocols of other states with  
29 regard to nurse staffing;

30 (B) Consult stakeholders and interested parties in the  
31 state; and

32 (C) Develop best practices and recommended protocols,  
33 including identifying areas of needed statutory or regulatory reform with  
34 regard to nurse staffing.

35 (h) On or before March 1, 2022, the task force shall file with the  
36 House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate Committee

1 on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor a final written report of the task  
2 force's activities, findings, and recommendations.

3 (i) The task force shall expire on March 1, 2022.

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