

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE
EDITOR FROM REGISTERED NURSES**

1234 5th Ave
Albany, NY 12203

March 22, 2004

Editor
Post Standard
Syracuse Newspapers
1 Clinton Square
P.O. Box 4915
Syracuse, NY 13221-4915

SAMPLE

To the Editor:

On June 17, 2002, the *Post Standard* published an article by Teri Weaver about the nursing shortage in Onondaga County facilities, particularly at Van Duyn Home and Hospital ("Van Duyn Nurses a Shortage of RNs"). The size of the shortage at Van Duyn is staggering, running more than three times the size of the NYS shortage. As the New York State Nurses Association prepares for another round of PERB fact finding in another round of protracted negotiations, one has to wonder if the county cares about the facts at all.

The RNs are hardworking professionals and deserve better treatment than what the county has demanded back in contract talks. Asking the nurses to reduce their benefits at a time when there simply aren't enough nurses is an approach that is sure to further aggravate the situation. We ask that the county address the shortage of nurses in a responsive and respectful manner and offer a contract that supports nurses. Each step toward creating a positive environment for nurses now may help prevent worse shortages in the future. We cannot ignore this problem any longer and we hope the county listens.

Sincerely

Jane Doe, RN

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE
EDITOR STAFFING LEGISLATION**

Jane Doe, RN
1234 5th Ave
Albany, NY 12203

March 22, 2004

Editor
1234 Any Street
Washington DC, 01234

SAMPLE

To the Editor:

As a registered nurse, I'm concerned about the problem of understaffing in healthcare facilities across our state.

RN staffing is extremely important to patients' health. A study published last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that patients on surgical units with patient-to-RN ratios of 8:1 were 31% more likely to die within 30 days than those on surgical units with patient-to-RN ratios of 4:1.

Understaffing is also making the nursing shortage worse, as RNs leave the profession because of intolerable and unsafe working conditions. Many of them would return to bedside care if conditions improved. Hospitals would then save thousands of dollars they are now spending to recruit staff and pay temporary agency nurses.

It's time for the government to enact legislation to assure safe RN staffing wherever care is delivered.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, RN

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE
EDITOR MANDATORY OVERTIME**

Jane Doe, RN
1234 5th Ave
Albany, NY 12203

March 22, 2004

Editor
1234 Any Street
Washington DC, 01234

SAMPLE

To the Editor:

As a registered nurse, I am greatly concerned about a practice in health care that is putting patients at risk – mandatory overtime for nurses.

More and more frequently, healthcare employers are forcing nurses to work beyond their regularly scheduled shifts. A recent survey by the State Education Department found that over half of hospital-based staff nurses routinely work overtime. Six out of ten said the overtime was either always or sometimes mandatory.

Overtime is closely connected to the stress nurses experience on the job. They are more likely to make serious errors. Their families are disrupted. Their own health begins to suffer. Yet, if they refuse overtime, they can be accused of abandoning their patients and face charges of unprofessional conduct.

The State Legislature must protect both patients and nurses by enacting legislation that would ban the practice of mandatory overtime.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, RN

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR
DISCLOSURE OF STAFFING-RELATED INFORMATION**

Jane Doe, RN
1234 5th Ave
Albany, NY 12203

March 22, 2004

Editor
1234 Any Street
Washington DC, 01234

SAMPLE

To the Editor:

As a registered nurse, I know that the numbers of RNs on staff in hospitals and nursing homes makes a difference in the quality of care patients will receive.

A study published last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that patients on surgical units with patient-to-RN ratios of 8:1 were 31% more likely to die within 30 days than those on surgical units with patient-to-RN ratios of 4:1.

Other studies have shown a connection between RN staffing and certain patient complications. Fewer RNs on staff results in a higher incidence of bedsores, urinary tract infections, pneumonia, and gastrointestinal bleeding.

The public has a right to know the ratios of RNs to patients in hospitals and nursing homes. Patients and their families should also know the rates of patient complications that indicate how much RN care patients are receiving at these facilities.

Our state government must enact legislation that would give the public information it can use in deciding where to go for quality nursing care.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, RN

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR
NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR
OF NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

Jane Doe, RN
1234 5th Ave
Albany, NY 12203

March 22, 2004

Editor
1234 Any Street
Washington DC, 01234

SAMPLE

To the Editor:

As a registered nurse, I am concerned about the nursing shortage in our state. It has been estimated by the State Education Department that current demand for RNs exceeds supply by more than 15,000 full-time positions. That number may increase to nearly 31,000 by the year 2007.

It's also important the nursing schools be supported in their efforts to expand to meet a growing need for registered nurses. The average nursing faculty member is 57 years of age, so there soon will be a critical shortage of nursing faculty.

The New York state budget includes no funding to support nursing education, while Gov. George Pataki recently announced \$33 million in aid to hospitals to support the education of medical students. Clearly, our government must take steps to end the growing public health crisis caused by the nursing shortage.

This year's state budget must include funds to provide scholarships for nursing students and grants to nursing schools.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, RN