



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES

The Spirit of Care

The Heart of Nursing

PRESS RELEASE

MARCH 13, 2006

Who's Defending the LPNs?
The National Federation of LPNs, That's Who.

NFLPN President Responds to Study That Suggests 37,000 LPNs be Replaced.

March 13, 2006; Gregory Howard, President of the National Federation of LPNs reviewed a study which has made national news called: "Nurse Staffing in Hospitals: Is There a Business Case for Quality?" This study was published in the Jan./Feb. issue of the journal "Health Affairs." The study indicated that certain hospitals could avoid 5,000 annual deaths if they replaced 37,000 LPNs with RNs. Many LPNs are infuriated by the findings and want to know who's defending the LPNs?

The researchers who conducted this study concluded that in the interest of patient safety, downsizing the number of LPNs in the hospital setting would achieve the greatest reduction in adverse outcomes and hospital days.

"It is unreasonable to propose downsizing LPNs, when all nursing personnel have not been considered and evaluated" said Howard. "It is clear that the unlicensed healthcare worker was not included in the equation, and if the skill mix, acuity of the patient and delegation were not a part of this research, then the research is seriously flawed."

Howard went on to say, "If the hypothesis of the researchers is that more patient deaths, increased lengths of hospital stays, and/or increased rates of hospital-linked complications are somehow linked to the LP/VN, my question to these researchers is: Are RN's delegating appropriately in the hospital setting and where are the unlicensed person in this equation?"

Howard also wants to know, "Why haven't the researchers looked at Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities to measure the quality of care provided by the LP/VN? These are the places where the majority of my colleagues work, 90% of the time independently. This population is very fragile and the LP/VN care demonstrated here would be critically important to a study that produces such controversial assumptions and recommendations."

The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses, Inc., was established in 1949 and provides leadership for LP/VNs employed in the United States. The NFLPN is the only organization for LP/VNs, which is run by LP/VNs. The NFLPN represents the LP/VN through relationships with other national nursing, medical and allied health organizations, legislators, government officials, health agencies and institutions, educators and other professional groups, which share the common goal of improved patient care.

"I invite all Licensed Practical/ Vocational Nurses who realize that their profession must be supported, promoted and unfortunately at times defended, to get involved," said Howard. "The NFLPN needs your voice. With over 1.2 million LP/VNs....*Imagine the changes we could make!* Get involved!"

For More Information, Please Contact

Melanie Corporan
National Federation of LPNs, Inc.
Membership Coordinator
1-800- 691-7915

*The letter is referring to a National News story, "Study Calls for More RN Staffing," which appeared in the Jan.25 issue of "Advance for LPNs Magazine." The news piece focused on the study: "Nurse Staffing in Hospitals: Is There a Business Case for Quality?" published in the Jan./Feb. issue of the journal "Health Affairs." **The study indicated that certain hospitals could***

avoid 5,000 annual deaths if they replaced 37,000 LPNs with RNs. Ms. Sherry Degryse, an LPN from Orange Park, Florida was infuriated by the findings and wrote a letter to the editor of "Advance" with the headline: *Who's Defending The LPNs?*

Who's Defending the LPNs?... The NFLPN, That's Who!

By Gregory Howard, President, National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses, Inc.

The researchers who conducted this study concluded that in the interest of patient safety, **downsizing the number of LPN's in the hospital setting would achieve the greatest reduction in adverse outcomes and hospital days. They suggest that 37,000 LP/VNs should be replaced with RNs.**

It is unreasonable to propose downsizing LPNs, when all nursing personnel have not been considered and evaluated. It is clear that the unlicensed healthcare worker was not included in the equation. And if the skill mix, perception of the patients, and delegation were not a part of this research, then the research is seriously flawed.

If the hypothesis of the researchers is that more patient deaths, increased lengths of hospital stays, and/or increased rates of hospital-linked complications are somehow linked to the LP/VN, my question to these researchers is: "Are RN's delegating appropriately in the hospital setting and where are the unlicensed person in this equation?"

Why haven't the researchers looked at Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities to measure the quality of care provided by the LP/VN? These are the places where the majority of my colleagues work, 90% of the time independently. This population is very fragile and the LP/VN care demonstrated here would be critically important to a study that produces such controversial assumptions and recommendations.

Advance for LPNs Magazine summed up the article with the headline: "**Study Calls for More RN Staffing.**" The three bullet remarks published by "Advance" make more sense than the double talk in the research paper. And the solution is cost effective.

- Greater use of RNs translates into fewer patient deaths, reduced hospital stays and decreased rate of hospital-linked complications.
- Increasing the number of hours of nursing care provided by both RNs *and* LPNs would result in fewer deaths, avoidable complications and days of care.
- Expanding both the proportion of RNs and number of hours provided by LPNs to reach the top quarter of hospitals (a combination of the other two options) saves the most lives and greatest number of patient days.

The NFLPN provides leadership for LP/VNs employed in the United States, and fosters high standards of practical/vocational nursing education and practice so that the best nursing care will be available to every patient. The NFLPN interprets the role and function of the LP/VN for the public in order to win greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution of the LP/VN to the nation's healthcare system.

The NFLPN represents the LP/VN through relationships with other national nursing, medical and allied health organizations, legislators, government officials, health agencies and institutions, educators and other professional groups, which share the common goal of improved patient care.

I invite Sherry Degryse, and all Licensed Practical Nurses who realize that their profession must be supported, promoted and unfortunately at times defended, to get involved. The NFLPN needs your voice. With over 1.2 million LP/VNs....*Imagine the changes we could make!* Get involved!

www.nflpn.org - 1-800-948-2511