SAFE STAFFING PASSES STATE ASSEMBLY

NEXT STOP: STATE SENATE
t all came together this week, on June 14. Within our hospitals the calls for safe staffing were heard. Our petitions were read. Our rallies and informational pickets were seen. Our POAs were lodged. Letters from supporters and to legislators were noticed. Our outreach to other unions, public health experts, community advocates... our voices became one. Our campaign for safe staffing scored a major victory and made history.

The **Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act**—A08580A (Gunther)—passed the New York State Assembly resoundingly today. The Act must now pass the State Senate and be signed by Governor Cuomo before it can become law, but the Assembly vote constituted a very critical step forward on our path to victory and positions the bill for a strong start in the 2016-2017 state legislative session. Come September, we'll be ready to take the final steps toward winning safe staffing for our patients, hitting the ground with more visibility, public support, and allies than ever before. We will call upon office seekers to support this measure.

NYSNA's leadership in this central campaign to protect patient care demonstrates a profound resolve and unity of purpose. Over the past year members came together as never before and waged a comprehensive campaign to see our Safe Staffing bill become a reality. It was our hard work—thousands of NYSNA members in all corners of the state—who spent countless hours educating, engaging, and mobilizing in our workplaces and communities and lobbying local governments and elected state representatives to raise awareness about the staffing crisis in our state.

NYSNA nurses mobilizing for victory

Inside our workplaces, we took myriad actions to address patient safety concerns. At our bargaining tables, we negotiated contract language to ensure safer staffing and protect patients. With every step, we gained focus and built unity. It was extraordinary.

A significant outreach innovation came in the form of our Safe Staffing Captain Campaign to document the conditions we face on every shift of every day, enforce our contract language, and provide a comprehensive picture of staffing conditions to help those outside our hospitals understand what we observe in our practice.

We filed grievances, made phone calls, signed petitions in our units, and met with nursing directors, labor-management committees,
A historic NY Assembly vote for safe staffing!

and administrators to shine a spotlight on unsafe conditions and raise care standards for our patients. Inside our union, we trained hundreds of members to be effective leaders and advocates. On March 8, we held our union’s first ever conference for RN advocates to further develop the educational, organizing, and advocacy skills gained through NYSNA’s member leader training program.

Community outreach

We educated and mobilized our friends, neighbors, and families while at the same time caring for our communities. Member volunteers from Oneida Healthcare Center, Samaritan Medical Center, Onondaga County, and St. Elizabeth gathered over 6,000 signatures in support of safe staffing legislation at last summer’s Great New York State Fair. Members in towns across the state gathered thousands of additional signatures by hosting NYSNA booths at local events such as the Kingston Farmers Market, Smithtown’s 350th Anniversary, the Marine and Outdoor Recreation Expo, and the Valley Stream Community Fest. There was much, much more.

We took our message to our communities with presentations to local governing boards, informational pickets, rallies, and vigils. NYSNA nurses at Ellis Medicine, St. Elizabeth, Nathan Littauer, Oneida Healthcare, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Joseph, St. Charles, Samaritan, Westchester Medical Center, and Vassar Brothers Medical Center all took their staffing concerns to their communities in recent months. In towns and cities across the state, NYSNA nurses raised awareness about what was happening inside our facilities.

“We want the community to understand the critical link between staffing and quality of care,” said Dawn Bailie, RN and member of CoNTINuED oN NExT PAGE

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the NY State Senate!!

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