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Bill 153

An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Public Hospitals Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Co-sponsors:
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Private Members' Bill

1st Reading November 18, 2026

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill amends the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the *Public Hospitals Act* and the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

The new section 9.1 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* sets out maximum patient-to-nurse ratios.

Multiple sections are added to the *Public Hospitals Act*. Section 34.1 provides that, within four months, the Ministry must implement mandatory trauma-informed leadership training for management of all hospitals that focuses on establishing psychological safety for all health care workers, eliminating stigma related to health care workers seeking mental health care and establishing routine, structured clinical debriefs after health care workers experience trauma in the workplace. Section 34.2 provides that, within six months, every hospital shall implement a 12-month orientation program for all new graduate registered nurses that includes a reduced workload and mentoring from more experienced nurses. This orientation program cannot be shortened for any reason. Section 34.3 provides that if a nurse is physically assaulted or verbally threatened while working at a hospital, the hospital shall determine if the nurse would like the assault or threat to be reported to law enforcement and, if so, report the assault or threat to the relevant law enforcement agency. The hospital shall co-operate with law enforcement with respect to any criminal charges that are laid as a result of the report. Section 34.4 provides that a hospital shall investigate and attempt to resolve every internal complaint of horizontal violence, bullying and lateral harassment. If a hospital fails to comply with this requirement, the Minister shall impose remedial measures.

The new section 15.0.1 of the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* provides that if a worker who works or worked as a nurse suffers from mental illness, the illness is presumed to be a personal injury arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment as a nurse, unless the contrary is shown.

Bill 153 **2026**

An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Public Hospitals Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

1 The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* is amended by adding the following section immediately before the heading to Part III:

Maximum patient-to-nurse ratios

9.1 No later than six months after the day this section comes into force, the Ministry shall ensure that the ratio of patients to nurses does not exceed the following:

1. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 1-to-1 for critical care patients on ventilators.
2. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 2-to-1 for,
    i. critical care patients not on ventilators, and
    ii. highly dependent patients who need mental health care.
3. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 3-to-1 for specialized care.
4. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 4-to-1 for inpatient and palliative care.
5. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 5-to-1 for rehabilitative care other than on night shifts.
6. A patient-to-nurse ratio of 7-to-1 for rehabilitative care on night shifts.

2 The *Public Hospitals Act* is amended by adding the following sections:

Trauma-informed leadership training

34.1 No later than four months after the day this section comes into force, the Ministry shall implement mandatory trauma-informed leadership training for management of all hospitals that focuses on,

(a) establishing psychological safety for all health care workers;

(b) eliminating stigma related to health care workers seeking mental health care;

(c) establishing routine, structured clinical debriefs after health care workers experience trauma in the workplace;

(d) establishing internal systems for reporting physical assaults and verbal threats against nurses that allow for the collection of information that can be used to analyse causes of such threats and violence and that can lead to systemic improvements in diminishing such threats and violence;

(e) preventing discouragement of nurses reporting physical assaults or verbal threats to a law enforcement agency and preventing penalization of, and retaliation against, such nurses;

(f) establishing schedules for mandatory meetings between nurses who graduated within the previous 12 months and their managers;

(g) establishing strategies to include frontline nurses in developing operational policies, scheduling and unit workflow; and

(h) compiling a list of approved psychotherapists who have training in or knowledge of the organizational culture and trauma experienced by nurses.

Nurse orientation program

34.2 (1) No later than six months after the day this section comes into force, every hospital shall implement a 12-month orientation program for all nurses who graduated within the previous 12 months that includes,

(a) a reduced workload compared to more experienced nurses;

(b) mentoring from more experienced nurses; and

(c) training on how to,

(i) identify psychological harm in the workplace, and

(ii) report physical violence or verbal threats internally or to a law enforcement agency.

No reduction in length of program

(2) No hospital shall reduce the length of the orientation program referred to in subsection (1) to less than 12 months for any reason, including to address staffing vacancies.

Hospital to report assaults, threats

34.3 (1) If a nurse is physically assaulted or verbally threatened while working at a hospital, the hospital shall determine if the nurse would like the assault or threat to be reported to law enforcement and, if so, report the assault or threat to the relevant law enforcement agency.

Hospital to co-operate with law enforcement

(2) A hospital shall co-operate with law enforcement with respect to any criminal charges that are laid as a result of a report under subsection (1).

Investigation, resolution re internal complaints

34.4 (1) A hospital shall, as soon as possible without compromising the regular activities of the hospital, investigate and attempt to resolve every internal complaint of horizontal violence, bullying and lateral harassment.

Remedial measures

(2) If a hospital fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (1), the Minister shall impose such remedial measures as the Minister determines are necessary to ensure future compliance, including mandatory training for hospital management and recommending the appointment under section 9 of a hospital supervisor to monitor compliance.

3 (1) The *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* is amended by adding the following section:

Presumptions re nurses

15.0.1 (1) If a worker who works or worked as a nurse suffers from mental illness, the illness is presumed to be a personal injury arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment as a nurse, unless the contrary is shown.

Injuries sustained before 1998

(2) Where the presumption in subsection (1) applies in relation to a mental illness suffered by a worker before January 1, 1998, the rights of the worker or their survivor shall, subject to the presumption, be determined in accordance with Part IX.

Regulations

(3) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations providing for such matters as the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable in relation to this section.

(2) Subsection 15.2 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), by adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and by adding the following clause:

(c) the presumption established under subsection 15.0.1 (1) applies with respect to a nurse.

(3) Section 15.2 of the Act is amended by striking out "section 15.1 and the regulations under it" wherever it appears and substituting in each case "section 15.0.1 or 15.1, as the case may be, and the regulations made under the section".

Commencement

4 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

5 The short title of this Act is the *Jordan Heffern Memorial Act (Preventing Nurse Suicides), 2026*.