

Labor Government to recruit 840 new nurses: Nurse-to-Patient Ratios

A Foley Labor Government will employ 840 additional nurses in NSW hospitals – comprising 735 new nurses in emergency departments and 105 new nurses in paediatric wards – to improve patient care, save lives and reduce waiting times across NSW.

The new nurses will be recruited in the first term of government. They will be part of the introduction of a nurse-to-patient ratio of one nurse for every three patients into emergency departments and paediatric wards in NSW. In addition, there will be one nurse for every resuscitation bed in emergency departments.

Labor's plan will benefit 75 emergency department and paediatric wards across NSW hospitals.

Nurse staffing ratios represent the minimum number of nurses that can safely care for patients.

In addition, Labor will enshrine nurse-to-patient ratios in law – for the first time in NSW – so future governments and health officials will have to ensure nurse numbers are protected and not traded away.

The additional nurses will cost an estimated \$96 million over the forward estimates.

Labor Leader Luke Foley and Shadow Health Minister Walt Secord were joined by Federal Labor Leader Bill Shorten to make this announcement at St George Hospital, where Labor reaffirmed its commitment to a \$307 million upgrade.

Quotes attributable to Labor Leader Luke Foley:

“Nurses are the bedrock of our hospitals – providing continuous care, often as the first point of contact in the hospital system. But if workloads are too high, nurses are unable to provide the care our patients deserve.

“Labor has a strong record of supporting nurses, and we understand that nurses are best placed to know what level of staffing is needed to provide safe and efficient care.

“Labor has listened – and in Government, we will ensure there is one nurse for every three patients, and enshrine this ratio in law.

“We value the extraordinary efforts of our hardworking nurses and midwives. By recruiting 840 new nurses, Labor will ensure they are able to safely continue their work.

“More nurses means better care for patients, improved waiting times and more lives saved.

“These additional staff will take pressure off staff and patients in over-stretched emergency departments, and provide more care for children in our paediatric wards across NSW.

Quotes attributable to Shadow Minister for Health Walt Secord:

“A Foley Labor Government will ensure that patients in NSW public hospitals receive the best possible care by increasing the number of nurses in emergency departments and paediatric wards. That is why we are providing an extra 840 nurses.

“The Liberals-Nationals have slashed \$3 billion from NSW health – after four years, the result is skyrocketing waiting times at emergency rooms and over stretched nurses and doctors.

“It’s time to give patients in NSW the best possible care, and give our hardworking and dedicated nurses the support they deserve.”

Key Facts

- Labor will spend \$96 million over the forward estimates to recruit 840 additional nurses – 735 nurses for emergency departments and 105 nurses in paediatric wards. This will benefit 75 emergency departments and paediatric wards across NSW.
- There will be one nurse for every three patients in every A, B and C peer group hospital emergency department in NSW; and every A, B and C peer group hospital paediatric ward in the state. There will also be one nurse for every resuscitation bed in emergency departments.
- Nurse staffing ratios ensure a base number of nurses are rostered on duty, and requires any absence from the roster to be replaced or filled by an employee of the same classification to ensure the quality of patient safety and care.

Some of the hospitals that will benefit include:

- For emergency departments: Bankstown Hospital, Belmont Hospital, Blacktown Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital, John Hunter Hospital, Maitland Hospital, Mount Druitt Hospital, Shoalhaven Hospital, Westmead Hospital, Wyong Hospital and Wollongong Hospital.
- For paediatric wards: Bega Hospital, Bankstown Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital, Canterbury Hospital, Fairfield Hospital, Goulburn Hospital, Gosford Hospital, Lismore Hospital, Maitland Hospital, Nepean Hospital, Sutherland Hospital, St George Hospital, Tweed Hospital.

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