



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**

VICTORIAN BRANCH

Newsflash

Ratio improvements and new ratios tabled in Victorian Parliament

What do the proposed changes mean for you?

Monday 27 August 2018

The Andrews Government has tabled draft legislation to improve and introduce new nurse/midwife ratios. The changes will mean an additional 600 nurses and midwives over the next five years.

The proposed bill will be debated in September. We are urging all parliamentarians to support the bill which will result in more nurses and midwives working in our Victorian public health system. If passed, the changes will be introduced from March 2019. We are working to ensure that the legislation is debated and passed by both houses of parliament by the last sitting date before the Andrews Government goes into pre-election caretaker mode.

This is a significant win for members and demonstrates the government's respect for nurses, midwives and their patients. The process is a stark contrast to campaigning for nine months, closing beds, walking out of hospitals and more than 30 community rallies to save nurse/midwife patient ratios during the 2011/2012 Respect Our Work EBA.

We know there is much more to do. We are in discussions with the Andrews Government seeking commitments to more improvements.

You'll find this information and links to the current Safe Patient Act 2015 and the Safe Patient Care Amendment Bill 2018 at anmfvic.asn.au/ratioamendments

If passed, and to ensure the nurses and midwives required to implement the improvements are available, the changes will be phased in over five years each March from 2019. Each phase has two key changes:

- changes to ratios – either improvements or the introduction of new ratios
- the removal of the '50% rule'. Where the number of beds is not divisible by the prescribed ratio, e.g. a 29-bed ward with a 1:4 ratio = 7.25 nurses, the number of nurses must always be rounded up, not down.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Phase 1 from 1 March 2019 – proposed amendments

Ratio improvement

Removal of night shift emergency department formula (s.20(2) of the Safe Patient Care Act 2015)

50% rule removal

1. All shifts in the following wards of level 1 and level 2 hospitals
 - a. general medical or surgical wards
 - b. coronary care units
 - c. high dependency units
 - d. operating theatres
 - e. post-anaesthetic recovery rooms
 - f. all shifts in Level 1 emergency departments
2. Night shifts in the following wards of level 3 and level 4 hospitals
 - a. general medical or surgical wards
 - b. all aged high care residential wards
 - c. coronary care units
 - d. high dependency units
 - e. operating theatres
 - f. post-anaesthetic recovery rooms
3. Night shifts in Level 2 and Level 3 emergency departments (and those with more than 7000 presentations per annum)
4. Night shifts in all aged high care residential ward in all hospitals

Other improvements

1. Abolition of the provisions allowing for below ratio arrangements to be proposed by a hospital
2. Sunshine, Casey and Monash Children's hospitals will be named as level 1 hospitals (Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Act)
3. Neo-natal intensive care unit ratios apply to all hospitals which have a NICU, rather than only the four named in the current Act (Part 2 s.28 of the Act)
4. Delivery suites become known as birthing suites
5. Direct entry midwives can be counted in meeting special care nursery ratios
6. Fairer, transparent and evidence-based provision for declaring nominated birthing suites to be used
7. Fairer, transparent and evidence-based provision for determining ratios in mixed wards

Phase 2 from 1 March 2020 – proposed amendments

Ratio improvements

1. Palliative care units 4:4:6 + in-charge on each shift
(currently 4:4:8 with no in-charge on ND. Part 2 S.23 of the Act)
2. Birthing suites (AM shifts) + in-charge if 6 suites or more
(currently no in-charge Part 2 S.31 of the Act)
3. Special care nurseries (AM and PM shifts) + in-charge if 8 cots or more
(currently no in-charge Part 2 S.27 of the Act)

New ratios

1. Oncology wards 4:4:8 + in-charge on all shifts
2. Acute stroke units 1:3 + in-charge on all shifts
3. Specialist haematology wards 3:3:5 + in-charge on all shifts

50% rule removal

1. Night shifts in all palliative care inpatient units and geriatric evaluation management beds
2. Morning shifts in the following wards of level 3 and level 4 hospitals
 - a. general medical or surgical wards
 - b. coronary care units
 - c. high dependency units
 - d. operating theatres
 - e. post-anaesthetic recovery rooms
 - f. level 4 acute wards
3. Morning shifts in Level 2 emergency departments, and emergency departments with more than 7000 presentations per annum

Phase 3 from 1 March 2021 – proposed amendments

New ratio

New morning, afternoon and night shift ratios in level 1 emergency department resuscitation bays 1:1 (currently NO ratio)

50% rule removal

1. Afternoon shifts in the following wards of level 3 and level 4 hospitals
 - a. general medical or surgical wards
 - b. coronary care units
 - c. high dependency units
 - d. operating theatres
 - e. post-anaesthetic recovery rooms

2. Morning shifts in:
 - a. palliative care inpatient units
 - b. rehabilitation beds and
 - c. geriatric evaluation management beds

3. Afternoon shifts in Level 2 emergency departments, and emergency departments with 5000-7000 presentations per annum

4. Night shifts in:
 - a) special care nurseries
 - b) neo-natal intensive care units
 - c) antenatal and postnatal wards
 - d) birthing suites

Phase 4 from 1 March 2022 – proposed amendments

50% rule removal

1. Afternoon shifts in:

- a) palliative care inpatient units
- b) rehabilitation beds and
- c) geriatric evaluation management beds

2. Morning shifts in:

- a) special care nurseries
- b) neo-natal intensive care units
- c) antenatal and postnatal wards
- d) birthing suites

Phase 5 from 1 March 2023 – proposed amendments

50% rule removal

1. Afternoon shifts in:

- a) special care nurseries
- b) neo-natal intensive care units
- c) antenatal and postnatal wards
- d) birthing suites

If you have questions, refer to our ratio improvements frequently asked questions document. This information, the current legislation and the amendment bill are available at anmfvic.asn.au/ratioamendments

27/08/2018

This document was amended on 31 August 2018