

OPEN HEARTS: 4-200 NURSES AND OUR COMMUNITY ALIKE SHARE GENEROSITY AND HOPE WITH ONE ANOTHER



It is far more meaningful to be generous and empathetic while suffering than when we are content. The qualities that make nurses so impactful have led some of us to have a ceaseless passion for caring for our communities. We would like to recognize the selfless dedication and hard work of some of our members in caring for their communities.



Vicki McGuire thoughtfully coordinated a blood drive through the NY Blood Center. As nurses at a Level 1 Trauma Center and Comprehensive Cancer Center, we see firsthand the tremendous impact these donations have on our patients. The initial drive was so successful that Vicki extended it to help fill the ongoing need. In one month, our membership was credited for twenty-eight donations, which means twenty-eight lives saved.



Stephanie Belonia, Stephanie Tovos, Erika Colindres, Kimberly Haspel, Anita Cruz, and Jesica Burgos coordinated the Nightmare Before Safe Staffing Trunk or Treat. Our membership donated candy and gently-used costumes for the event, which was open to the community. Twenty-seven cars lined the union office parking lot, decorated in all manners of fun from Cookie Monster to Barbie to Star Wars. Participants voted for their favorite vehicles with our Shock Trauma, PICU, and CINJ units being the top picks.



Karen Carey is responsible for Backpacks for David, an annual drive conceived to celebrate the memory of her son and his love of volunteer work. Last year the drive collected twenty-four backpacks filled with clothing, toiletries, and food for the homeless and disadvantaged. Lori Haman and Carrie Harmer assisted in delivering the backpacks to Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick. Karen reports that it was the most successful year thus far—so much so that this November she is doubling her goal.



Last but not least, our strike was rounded out with the Solidarity Toy Drive for the children of our nurses. Our membership, their loved ones, and nurses from around the country donated gifts from an Amazon wish list sponsored by Nurse Blake. Countless hours were dedicated to the season of giving by Jennifer Kwock and her family, Nina Kesely and her family, Melanie Fryar-Francis, Michelle Lee, Jenny Torres, Joanna Backiel, MaryLynn Dupuis, Stephanie Torres, Melody Aquino, Jessica Aquino, and Carol Tanzi. Nearly five-hundred presents were delivered to the children by Santa himself and his very own North Brunswick Police escort. -

Amanda Leger

LOCAL 4-200 INSPIRES RNS ACROSS THE STATE TO DEMAND, AND WIN, BETTER STAFFING

The nurses of USW 4-200 set a precedent for nurses in New Jersey when we took a stand to protect the safety of our patients and our profession. Since our historic contract, nurses organized under HPAE successfully bargained for their own improved staffing ratios. Nurses at Cooper University, Englewood Hospital and Palisades Medical Center, secured better staffing ratios after their members authorized strikes and held town halls regarding staffing.

HPAE president Debbie White credited her members' resolve to our inspiring fight for safe staffing. Her statement was quoted by NorthJersey.com as, "That strike gave us much needed resolve. Feelings of apprehension were among the employers much more than the workers." With these victories following in our footsteps, another 3100 nurses have secured improved staffing ratios. This will ensure higher quality care for patients, and higher job satisfaction for nurses.

Research has repeatedly shown these to be the primary drivers of the staffing crisis afflicting our profession. Five more HPAE hospitals will be negotiating contracts next year. As more hospitals demonstrate that this is the way to move forward with healthcare in New Jersey, the fight for safe staffing legislation gains more leverage.

After holding a NJ Senate Health Committee hearing on nurse staffing in January, Senator Vitale made the first significant revision to his bill in nearly 20 years. The proposed Patient Protection and Safe Staffing Act (S2700/A3683) would establish staffing ratios for both nurses and CCTs in all hospitals across NJ. Since this new bill was introduced, it has continued earning support in both the NJ Senate and Assembly, however some of the sponsors of the previous bill have yet to sign on the new one as cosponsors.

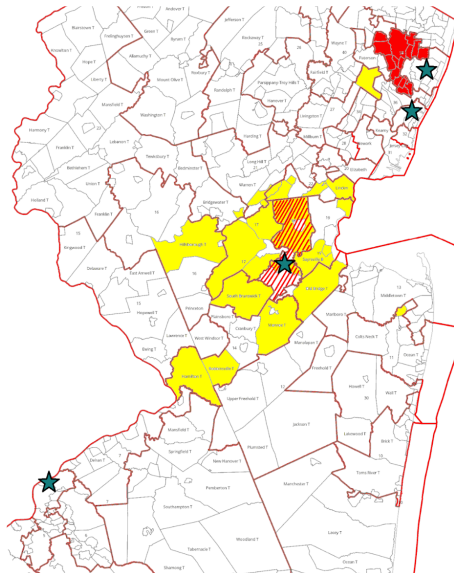
If every representative currently in office that had ever cosponsored the bill in the past sponsored it now, A3683 would have 26 cosponsors in the assembly, and S2700 would have 20 in the senate. For reference, there are 80 members of the assembly, and 40 senators total. Support has NEVER been higher for this bill.

Listed below are the representatives that were cosponsors of the bill in 2023 that have yet to cosponsor the bill this year. If you see one of your representatives, please reach out to their offices once again and remind them to support bills S2700/A3683. The bill has been endorsed by the New Jersey State Nurses Association, and federal legislation has been endorsed by the American Nurses Association.

-Christian Kane

Representative

Sen. Vin Gopal	District 11	(732)-695-3371
Sen. Andrew Zwicker	District 16	(908)-308-8672
Asm. Robert Karabinchak	District 18	(732)-548-1406
Asm. Sterley Stanley	District 18	(732)-875-3833
Sen. John McKeon	District 27	(973)-377-1606
Sen. Teresa Ruiz	District 29	(973)-484-1000
Sen. Nellie Pou	District 35	(973)-247-1555
Asm. Lisa Swain	District 38	(201)-576-9199
Asm. Chris Tully	District 38	(201)-576-9199



Pictured: Townships (yellow) and State Legislative Districts (red) that have endorsed safe staffing legislation thanks to our members' appeals to their communities. Hospitals with contractual staffing ratios pictured with stars.

