



**Lifespan**

*Delivering health with care.*

**Government Relations**

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**David A. Balasco, Esq.**  
Vice President

March 12, 2024

Susan Donovan  
Chair  
House Health and Human Services Committee  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: H.7826 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Nurses**

Dear Chair Donovan:

We write in support of H.7826, An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Nurses. This bill will amend the conditions upon which a nurse would be exempt from certain licensing requirements to include eligibility to practice, before taking and receiving results of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).

This bill is a significant and necessary step towards ensuring our hospitals, clinics, and health care facilities have skilled, newly trained nurses available to assist Rhode Island during the current staffing shortage that spans our system and state. Moreover, as it is well known, these shortages will only continue to grow unless we proactively and collectively implement new activities to recruit and train the next generation of healthcare professionals. By allowing this limited exemption, new graduates that have not been scheduled for the NCLEX exam can enter the workforce under the direction and supervision of the preceptor RN up and after taking the exam. These new graduates are paired with this preceptor RN and work side by side for 12-13 weeks for medical surgical units and six months for critical care, emergency department, and peri-operative services. This three-month acceleration allows healthcare facilities to immediately onboard nurses post-graduation without the usual two-to-three-month delay as the new graduate awaits an assigned date to sit for the national exam. This time period also improves the new graduates training and study for the exam.

Of note, this practice was in place throughout the most recent COVID health emergency through an Executive Order. Throughout the duration of the Executive Order it allowed hospitals to utilize staff to care for our volume of patients. This proposed bill simply codifies the Executive Order in statute as our staffing challenges have continued beyond the pandemic.

There are many actions that Lifespan is taking to increase workforce development and this bill would help us continue our recruitment efforts. We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Balasco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Balasco" clearly distinguishable.

David Balasco  
Vice-President, Government Relations