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CLIENT ALERT

NEW YORK MANDATES DISCLOSURE OF NURSE STAFFING RATIOS

On September 17, 2009 Governor Paterson signed into law a bill that requires healthcare facilities to provide information regarding nurse staffing to state healthcare regulators and the public. Specifically, the Nursing Care Quality Protection Act ("NCQPA") requires hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and other facilities with an operating certificate pursuant to Article 28 of the Public Health Law to report both the number of registered nurses and licensed practical nurses that provide care to patients, as well as the nurse staffing ratios of nurses to patients.

In addition to staffing ratios and the number of registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, healthcare facilities must also report the number of unlicensed personnel providing direct care to patients, as well as the method used to determine and adjust staffing levels. NCQPA also contains a provision for healthcare facilities to disclose the incidence of adverse patient events, such as medication errors and injuries.

NCQPA will take effect on March 16, 2010. The New York State Department of Health is expected to develop regulations implementing the new legislation.

In anticipation of the law's implementation, it is recommended that healthcare employers review their nurse staffing ratios and procedures.

If you should have any questions regarding the new legislation, please contact us.

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