

SATS

POSITION STATEMENT

STAFFING IN THE OPERATING ROOM

It is well known that the current demand for peri-operative professional nurse practitioners grossly outweighs the supply.

The average age of peri-operative nurse practitioners ranges between 40-45.

The aging of the current group will have a negative impact on the service to the patient. The daily demands of the profession, the attempts to control costs and to meet financial targets and the demand for higher volumes of work, done by less people, has resulted in many skilled people leaving the profession.

SATS like many other organisations can only address general guidelines and recommends that nurse-patient ratios be developed, taking into consideration the safety of the patient, the level of care required, patient acuities and the availability of resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT SATS:

- **B**elieves that nursing is both an art and a science
- **U**rges managers to examine and include factors of nursing competence, patient safety, patient acuity, and availability of resources, when determining nurse-patient ratios
- **R**ecommends that nurse-patient ratios be developed with inclusion and compliance to the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Condition of Service Act
- **S**upports the use of evidence based research and the identification of quality indicators and patient outcomes to monitor the nurse- patient ratios
- **U**rges managers to provide support and the establishment of a “no blame” relationship between surgeons, peri-operative staff and management
- **B**elieves that consideration be given to impeding factors as identified in the provision of adequate staffing
- **A**ffirms that during invasive surgical procedures, the minimum nurse- patient ratio recommendation, is one registered professional nurse, one circulating and one anaesthetic nurse.(Enrolled or Registered)

- **R**ecommends the above as minimum requirements for all surgery
- **W**ill continue to discourage the use of unlicensed practitioners to replace peri-operative professional practitioners
- **R**ejects the use of the economic situation of the provider as a basis for providing inadequate staffing numbers
- **R**ecommends that nurse- patient ratios be developed in consideration with community and the population served
- **E**ncourages the defining and development of nurse- patient ratios that include patient safety regulations, available legislation, error prevention and sustainable positive outcomes