

Reporting ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios: Suggested Guidance

This document and the corresponding Nurse-to-Patient Ratio Calculation Template contain recommendations for calculating and reporting quarterly ICU staffing information in compliance with DPH's *Guidelines for Certification of Acuity Tools pursuant to 958 CMR 8.00, "Patient Assignment Limits for Registered Nurses in Intensive Care Units in Acute Hospitals"*. This guidance was developed by ONL and MHA in conjunction with the six AMCs and reflects updates to DPH guidance issued on September 30, 2016.

Nurse-to-Patient Ratio Calculation Template Instructions

To assist with calculating the quarterly nurse-to-patient ICU ratios, the attached Nurse-to-Patient Ratio Calculation Template was developed to provide a method for standardizing the data used in determining the nurse-to-patient quarterly ratios for public reporting.* If you choose to use this form, please follow the instructions below:

1. In the first tab labeled "Template", please fill in all contact information.
2. Please fill in the reporting period information (ex: 1/1/2016 - 3/31/2016).
3. Please list the name and type of each ICU at your facility, and then enter all required information in the yellow highlighted boxes only.
4. Once all information in the yellow boxes has been entered, the spreadsheet will calculate your quarterly nurse-to-patient ratio for you. This calculated ratio information will then populate into the second tab labeled "Information for DPH" that displays the data you are required to submit per DPH Guidance. This is the information you should use when filing a separate incident report for each ICU. Please note that you **SHOULD NOT** copy this grid and input it into HCFRS. Instead, you need to specifically write out the numbers and details from each box into the narrative section for each incident report.

**If you hover over the column headings, you will be able to see details about the requested statistics.*

ICU Staffing Information: Submission Details

All acute care hospitals with an ICU must submit quarterly ICU staff nurse-to-patient ratios to DPH via the Health Care Facility Reporting System (HCFRS) under Section 231 of Chapter 111 of the General Laws. When preparing to submit the required information, please note the following:

- All acute care hospitals should submit data for all ICUs regardless if they have an acuity tool certified by DPH.
- Each hospital must submit a separate HCFRS incident report for each individual ICU within the hospital. There will be a different case number for each individual ICU, so if your facility has more than one ICU, please provide the name of the ICU in the incident narrative section and submit a separate report for each unit.
 - Note: The number associated with the file will change from a "1000..." number to your assigned facility number, and the "submit" section will read "complete" once you have successfully submitted the incident report.
- The following information should be reported in the incident narrative section:
 - 1) Reporting Period (i.e. 7/1/2016 – 9/30/2016)
 - 2) Average daily patient census;
 - 3) Average daily staff nurse censuses; and
 - 4) Average daily staff nurse-to-patient ratio (dividing the average daily patient census by the average daily staff nurse census).
- Please do not round when reporting the required information, but include all decimal points when reporting to DPH and posting each ICU's ratio data on your hospital website.

- Per the updated DPH guidance released on September 30, 2016, please note that every patient occupying a bed in an ICU must be included in the average daily patient censuses, even if some patients in those beds do not receive intensive care services.

** Please note that a staff nurse is defined as a “Registered Nurse providing direct patient care in an ICU,” and does not include other nurses within a unit.*

Posting ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios on an Acute Care Hospital Website

The quarterly ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios must also be posted on the acute hospital’s website within seven days of submitting this information to DPH. Existing regulations do not specify where or how the ICU data should be displayed on each acute hospital’s website. However, it is suggested that each facility post their quarterly ratios within the same public webpage where quality data is provided to the public, where information on your critical care unit(s) is posted, or another webpage for the hospital. **It is critical that hospitals post their quarterly staffing information where it is easily accessible for compliance purposes.** Please note that some hospitals are posting the entire grid from the second tab of the Calculation Template (“Information for DPH”) on their hospital website to meet the reporting requirement.

Suggested Steps for Uploading ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios into HCFRS

Once your hospital has calculated the required information, please see the suggested steps below for uploading the ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios into HCFRS.

1. Once the user has logged into HCFRS, select “Create a Case”.
2. Hospital information appears for confirmation. If accurate, select “save”.
3. Scroll down on the main screen to Available Action and select “Enter Intake Report”. Then click “Start Action”.
4. Where it says patient information – select the option indicating that there is “NO” patient involved as this is a required field.
5. In the Incident Type Drop Down – select the “ICU Staffing Report”.
6. Please enter the first day of the reporting period when prompted to enter the incident date. For example, if you are submitting a response for July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016 then select 7/1/2016 as the incident date.
7. In the Incident Narrative – type in the name of the individual ICU as this is a required field. Type in the three required pieces of data for the unit (Average daily patient census, Average daily staff nurse census, and Average daily staff nurse-to-patient ratio).
8. Select Dashboard view.
9. Upload the report.
10. Select “Submit Intake Report” (located in the same row as the “Enter Intake Report” option).
11. To finish, click “Start Action” and then “Save” to upload the report.
12. Select “close case”. Please repeat for each ICU at your facility.

Timeline for Reporting ICU Nurse-to-Patient Ratios

The schedule for 2017 should follow:

Quarter	Reporting period	Due to DPH	Post on hospital website
1st Quarter	Jan – Mar 2017	April 15, 2017	April 22, 2017
2nd Quarter	Apr – Jun 2017	July 15, 2017	July 22, 2017
3rd Quarter	Jul – Sept 2017	October 15, 2017	October 22, 2017
4th Quarter	Oct – Dec 2017	January 15, 2018	January 22, 2018