

sainato

Nurses Newsletter



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REP. SAINATO ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR NURSING SCHOOL STUDENTS

Rep. Sainato said grants are available for nursing students through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation.

The grants are designed to aid in the enrollment and retention of students in nursing programs in Pennsylvania.

The funding, awarded to 124 nursing schools, will be used to provide financial aid to people pursuing a career in nursing, as well as increase the recruitment and retention rates among nursing programs.

Rep. Sainato said in order for schools to receive a nursing education grant, an award proposal must be submitted to PHEF. For more information about this and other available aid, visit www.FuturesInNursing.org

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW LAW AGAINST MANDATORY OVERTIME

A law was enacted on July 1, 2009, that prohibits employers from forcing nurses and other direct caregivers to work beyond their scheduled shift, except in cases of real emergencies. After years of effort, Pennsylvania nurses have won this protection for the sake of their patients and profession.

Rep. Sainato said nurses and other caregivers covered by the law can refuse overtime and no longer can be dismissed or retaliated against by the employer. They can still, however, volunteer for overtime.

The law covers workers who work in direct patient care or clinical services, including RNs, LPNs, respiratory therapists and certain laboratory technicians. Physicians and physician assistants are excluded.

The law covers all medical facilities, including acute care hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, rehab facilities, nursing homes, ambulatory surgical facilities and state health facilities.

Rep. Sainato said the law provides for certain exceptions, including declared national, state or municipal emergencies; natural disasters; acts of terrorism; or widespread outbreaks of disease.



Rep. Sainato said medical professionals can take steps to prevent medical identity theft

We have all heard or read about identity theft and the financial nightmares that arise when an individual's identity is stolen.

Unfortunately, this crime has bred a relatively new form of identity theft – medical identity theft. This crime can be even more dangerous than the more publicized financial identity theft since medical identity theft can cause life-threatening events or even death.

Medical identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal information and uses it to obtain medical care, buy drugs, submit false billings to an insurance company or Medicare, or sell it to someone else for illegal purposes.

Medical identity theft can leave you with a pile of bills to deal with, and as a consequence, create credit problems for you. But more importantly, this crime can result in incorrect information being inserted into your medical records – information that your doctor or other health-care provider might rely on regarding your care, such as the wrong blood type or prescription medication.

Once inaccurate information gets into your medical file, it can be difficult to correct because of certain privacy laws.

Take these steps to protect your personal medical information:

- Don't share your insurance or other personal information with anyone other than a legitimate health-care provider.
- Don't provide your medical information to anyone who has offered free services.
- Don't lend your insurance card or Medicare card to anyone. Besides the obvious potential medical consequences, this is illegal and you could face criminal charges.

Credit reports are also a valuable review tool to ensure that someone else hasn't stolen your medical information. Under federal law, you are entitled to one free annual credit report from each of the three credit reporting companies. You can request it by writing: Free Annual Credit Report - Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281; or visiting www.annualcreditreport.com.

Rep. Sainato supports nurses

Rep. Sainato annually meets with nurses to discuss nursing-related legislation.

He supports the nursing profession by:

- Supporting nurse protection legislation
- Supporting the new mandatory overtime law
- Supporting increased reimbursement for school nurse services
- Supporting legislation that would require all nurses be RN's
- Supporting a resolution declaring May 6-12 as Nurses Week in Pennsylvania.

Rep. Sainato reminds nurses that two bills are pending in a state House committee that would prohibit people from using the title of "nurse" or "practical nurse" in a professional capacity unless they are duly licensed as such by the Pennsylvania Nursing Board. The two bills are under consideration in the House Professional Licensure Committee.

HIPAA CAN HELP

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is intended to protect patients' health information.

Under this law, you have the right to obtain your medical records, although you can be charged for the copies. To get these records, you should contact your provider and ask about the process for requesting them.

Once you have had the opportunity to review your medical records and you believe changes are necessary, contact your provider.

Ask if the provider has a specific process for amending medical records and follow it. You should identify sections of your records that you believe are inaccurate or incorrect. If the provider agrees with your changes, it must include those changes in your file.

If the provider disagrees with your changes, it must notify you. Then, you will have the opportunity to add a short statement to your records that explains what you believe the inaccuracies are and why. Your provider does have the opportunity to provide its own statement in your records explaining why it was unwilling to change your medical file.

If you have other questions regarding your medical record, contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights at 1-866-627-7748.

Rep. Sainato explains new law offering health insurance options for young adults

A new law expands health insurance options for adult children, which the Insurance Department says represents the highest number of those without health insurance in the state.

The law, Act 4 of 2009, allows adult children between the ages of 19 and 30 to continue receiving coverage and care through their parents' employer-based health insurance. Uninsured, single, adult children who either reside in Pennsylvania or are full-time students may be covered by their parents' health insurance plan, provided the plan agrees to it. Parents may be responsible for any additional premium costs.

Rep. Sainato said the Pennsylvania Insurance Department estimates that the change will increase access to health care for approximately 15,000 young adults.

For more information, visit www.insurance.state.pa.us.

Rep. Sainato announces \$25,000 state grant to ambulance service

Rep. Sainato said the Noga Ambulance Service in Lawrence County has been awarded \$25,000 in funding through the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program.

Rep. Sainato said the funds were used to purchase and install energy-efficient T-8 lighting to replace existing T-12 fluorescent lamps, along with high-efficiency air conditioning, doors, windows, insulation and water-saving devices.

The Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program is a state program originating out of the Alternative Energy Investment Act of 2008 that provides a 25 percent reimbursement grant, up to a maximum of \$25,000, to enable Pennsylvania small businesses to acquire certain equipment that promotes energy efficiency.

For more information on the program, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us.

Sainato supports passage of patient-nurse ratio bill

Rep. Sainato said that a bill has been introduced that would establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in health-care facilities in Pennsylvania. He said the proposal is currently before the House Health and Human Services Committee for review.

The legislation not only would establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, but it would go a step further and require health-care facilities to implement adequate direct-care nursing staffing plans.

Rep. Sainato said passage of the bill would be a win-win situation for both nurses and patients.

Currently, Pennsylvania does not have any laws that govern nurse-to-patient ratios. The proposal would require:

- A one-to-one ratio for nurses and patients in the operating room and trauma emergency room.
- A one-to-two nurse-to-patient ratio for critical care areas.
- A one-to-three nurse-to-patient ratio for emergency room, pediatrics, step down and telemetry units.
- A one-to-four nurse-to-patient ratio for intermediate care nursery, medical surgical acute care and psychiatric.
- A one-to-five nurse-to-patient ratio for rehabilitation units.
- A one-to-six nurse-to-patient ratio for postpartum and well-baby nursery units.

Sainato said the bill would require facilities to comply with an adequate staffing plan, maintain daily staffing and statistical records, and provide a work assignment policy to nurses. Health-care facilities would have to comply with the provisions of the bill as a condition of licensure and could be assessed civil penalties for failure to comply.

The bill also includes a provision that would create nurse recruitment grants, aimed at increasing nursing education opportunities.

Rep. Sainato said the grants would be available to health-care facilities, labor organizations that represent nurses, or approved nursing education programs. The grants would be available to support outreach programs at elementary and secondary schools to inform guidance counselors and students of education opportunities regarding nursing, and to create demonstration programs for high school students to encourage them to enter the nursing field.

Rep. Sainato said similar legislation has been introduced in previous legislative sessions.



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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE 9TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Here to serve you!

My staff and I can help you with a wide variety of state-government related issues

Feel free to contact us at:

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Or, you can reach me through my Web site at www.pahouse.com/Sainato/contact.asp.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP WITH:

- Information on property foreclosures
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program applications
- Senior citizen information, including PACE and PACENET and living wills
- PennDOT forms, information or concerns
- Voter registration and absentee ballots
- Problems with any state government agency
- Tours of the state Capitol
- House citations to honor accomplishments of individuals or groups or family milestones