

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH LICENSING SERVICES
MEDICAL FACILITIES LICENSING
SP-027-PHL-MED**

IMPLEMENTATION OF A HOSPITAL ACUITY PLAN

This substantive policy statement is advisory only. A substantive policy statement does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal procedures of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules made in accordance with the Arizona Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this substantive policy statement does impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may petition the agency under Arizona Revised Statutes Section 41-1033 for a review of the statement.

The purpose of this substantive policy statement is to notify the public of the Department's interpretation of A.A.C. R9-10-214(C)(2) and (3) to ensure that a patient receives appropriate nursing services during unexpected circumstances beyond the control of a hospital or nurse executive.

According to R9-10-201(1):

"Acuity" means a patient's need for hospital services based on the patient's medical condition.

According to R9-10-201(2):

"Acuity plan" means a method for establishing nursing personnel requirements by unit based on a patient's acuity.

According to R9-10-214(C):

A nurse executive shall ensure that:

2. An acuity plan is established, documented, and implemented that includes:
 - a. A method that establishes the types and numbers of nursing personnel that are required for each unit in the hospital;
 - b. An assessment of a patient's need for nursing services made by a registered nurse providing nursing services directly to the patient; and
 - c. A policy and procedure stating the steps a hospital will take to:
 - i. Obtain the necessary nursing personnel to meet patient acuity, and
 - ii. Make assignments for patient care according to the acuity plan;
3. Registered nurses, including registered nurses providing nursing services directly to a patient, are knowledgeable about the acuity plan and implement the acuity plan established under subsection (C)(2);

The Department recognizes that circumstances may arise that are beyond the control of the hospital or the nurse executive that cause the acuity plan established and documented under R9-10-214(C)(2) to be impossible to implement. For example, acuity may increase unexpectedly during a shift, requiring an increase in staffing. In such circumstances, the hospital is required to implement the policy and procedure in R9-10-214(C)(2)(c), according to the situation creating the increased staffing requirement, to address how patients' needs for nursing services will be met in these circumstances. The hospital is required to document the implementation of the policy and procedure and the steps taken.
