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Staffing ratios have support in Illinois

It was a sad day when I read that Gov. Blagojevich feels that staffing ratios similar to those in California do not appear to have strong support in Illinois (“Laying Down the Law,” Aug. 15 issue). I would advise the governor to come and listen to Cook County nurses — it’s all we talk about. Giving hospitals free rein to determine staffing ratios leads working nurses to the point of burnout. No wonder we have a shortage. This practice simply does not work and has to stop.

If Gov. Blagojevich really wants to know what safe ratios are, he should study patient outcomes in California and see how ratios have improved patient care and nurse recruitment and retention. Staff nurses should never be taken out of the nursing practice equation. It’s bad business and it’s bad politics — just ask Gov. Schwarzenegger.

— Kevin Barrett
Cook County, Ill.

Professional piercers on call?

In the world of health care there is now yet another language to understand: that of body piercing. A 2002 study regarding body piercing of undergraduate students at a New

revealed that 51% of students had something pierced “beyond their ears.” Perhaps the idea of having a professional piercer on call is not such an unbelievable concept. Professional piercers have experience in the initial placement of body jewelry and the assessment of post-piercing complications, as well as safe jewelry removal techniques. The common answers of “just take it out” or “just cut the jewelry off” are not appropriate or even safe in many cases, especially with those patients with larger-gauge jewelry. Since the terminology and jewelry are foreign to most medical staff, whom better to ask regarding the proper care and removal of the jewelry than the piercers themselves?

— Scott DeBoer RN, MSN, CEN, CCRN, CFRN,
Chicago, Ill., along with professional body piercers
Elayne Angel and Troy Amundson, EMT-B

Success with Botox

I read with interest the article “The Many Faces of Botulinum Toxin” in the Aug. 1 issue. I have fibromyalgia and have had three injections of Botox, and I have been relieved of pain. The injections last about six months. Also, I am on Medicare with an insurance supplement, which covers the cost of the injections.