

## **Letter: Question 1 a threat to CHP patients – Berkshire Eagle, October 16, 2018**

To the editor:

Community Health Programs opposes the Question 1 ballot initiative, with its strict mandates for nurse-patient ratios in hospitals and costly fines for staffing shortfalls. The impacts of Question 1 reach well beyond the hospital setting and threaten health care access and health security for more than 30,000 patients of Community Health Programs.

CHP fully supports our hospital-based nursing colleagues and the excellent care they provide. CHP's opposition to Question 1 is based on pressing workforce challenges: community health centers, especially those in rural areas, already face nursing shortages through competition from higher paying, city-based hospitals and health care organizations.

If hospitals here and elsewhere must hire more aggressively to maintain high nurse-patient ratios, they will drain nurses from community care settings such as ours. We will be unable to fill key community-based nursing positions, our patients will face longer wait times and we will face rising costs to fill vacant nursing positions.

In recent years, Berkshire County has witnessed the confusion and disruption caused by the loss of a hospital in our community. We cannot afford another threat to the stability of our region's healthcare system, which would surely follow if CHP is unable to hire and retain community-based nursing professionals. Question 1 is a threat to Berkshire County's overall community health.

*Lia Spiliotes,*

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