

Persons in charge have authority to augment staff to ensure patient safety

Charge nurses are often told that they must get approval from management to augment staff to ensure patient safety. On many occasions, they are discouraged by managers from exercising their discretion or instructed to disregard clinically relevant precautions in favour of budgetary constraints.

If an on-call manager does not permit the augmentation in advance or at the time that the charge nurse calls for it, the charge nurse can submit an OHS and PRC concern. This aligns with the principle of work now, grieve later.

It is important to remember that *Article 16, Responsibility Allowance, Temporary Assignment and In Charge*, of the Provincial Collective Agreement states that persons designated in charge shall have the authority to augment staff to ensure patient safety without seeking authorization.

Article 16.02 (d) reads:

Persons designated in charge shall have the authority to augment staff (which may include authorization of overtime) to ensure patient safety considering the volume of patients on the unit and their acuity. In exercising this authority, Employees are expected to use their critical thinking skills, along with their professional and clinical judgment subject to any Employer-issued processes, tools or algorithms.

**Some UNA Collective Agreements often have different provisions.
Check your Agreement or with your Local for details.*

