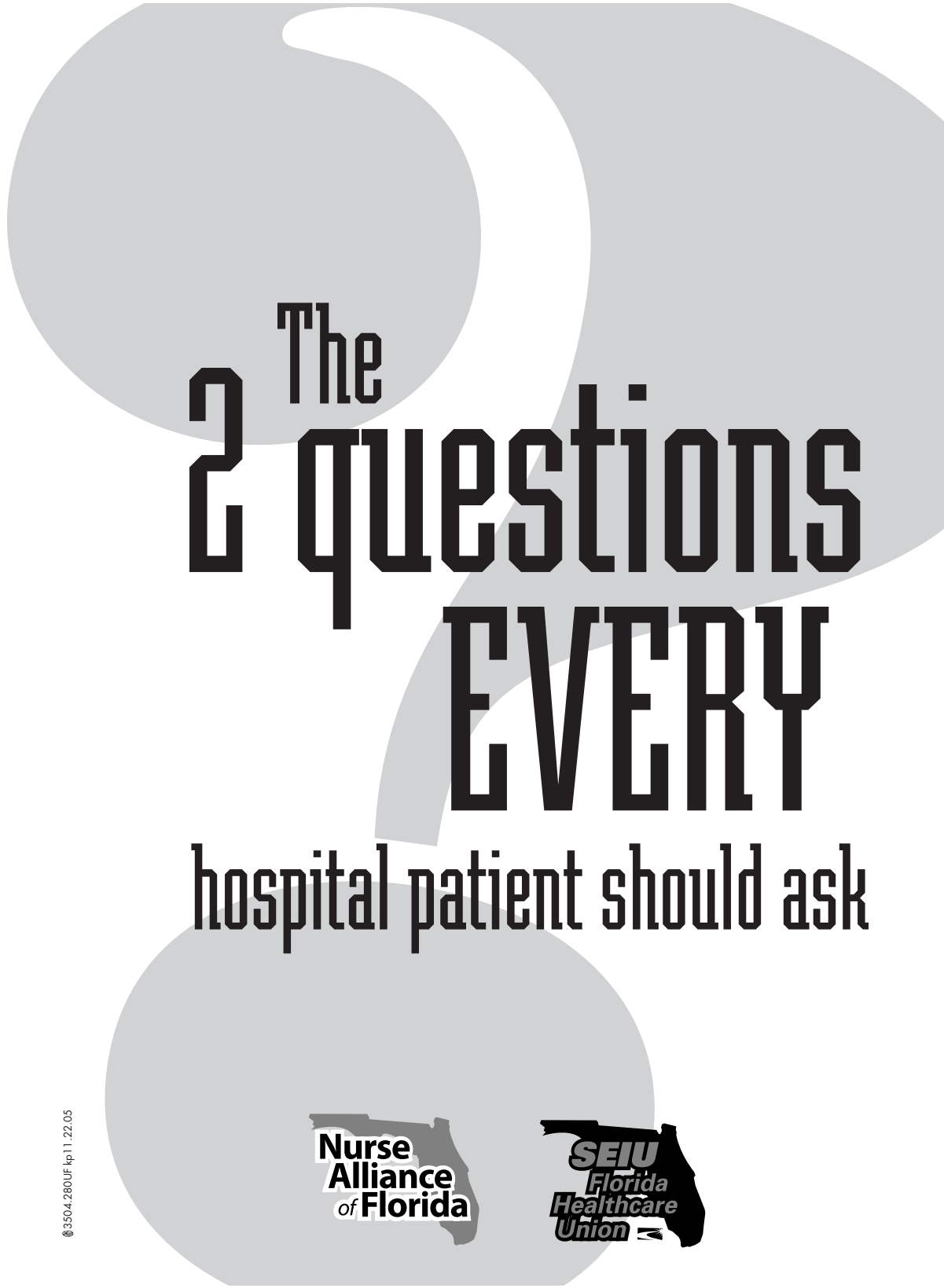


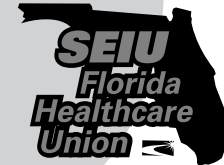
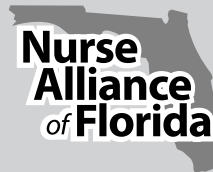


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The 2 questions EVERY hospital patient should ask

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Study after study has confirmed what every nurse knows —the number of patients a nurse is assigned impacts health care quality.¹

For instance, a 2002 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that patients in hospitals with nurse-to-patient ratios of eight patients per nurse had a 31 percent greater chance of dying than those in hospitals with four patients per nurse.²

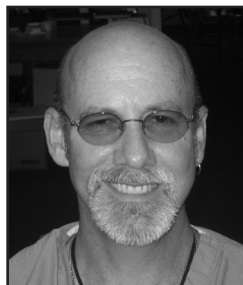


“People are in the hospital because they need constant nursing care. If I am assigned too many patients, my workload doesn’t allow me to give all my patients the time and attention they need and deserve.”

—Juanita Alicante, RN, Miami

“Every time I walk into a patient’s room, I am assessing his or her health and adjusting the treatment. The more time I have to spend with the patient, the sooner I can detect changes in his or her condition.”

—Frank Genung, RN, West Palm Beach



“Bedside nurses are the voice for hospital patients. We are there 24 hours a day seven days a week. Doctors depend on our reports. Families depend on our advice and support. Patients trust us to do what is right for them, but we don’t control how many patients we are assigned. Florida needs a minimum safe staffing standard.”

—Grace Meatley, RN, Miami

Two questions to ask your nurse to ensure your local hospital has safe staffing levels

1 How many patients are you currently assigned?

The number of patients a nurse is assigned can directly impact the quality of care you will receive. Here are the safe staffing standards Florida nurses have been fighting for³:

Department	The maximum number of patients a nurse should be assigned
Medical Surgical Psychiatry	4
Emergency Department Step Down Unit Telemetry	3
Critical Care Labor and Delivery	2

2 Are you a permanent hospital employee or do you work for an outside agency?

Sometimes, hospitals hire staff from temporary staffing agencies to supplement their permanent staff. These nurses are technically proficient, however, at least one study has shown that an over-reliance on agency nurses can reduce patient care.⁴

If you feel that the hospital has assigned your nurse too many patients, ask for the department director to call in more staff.

¹ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Hospital Nurse Staffing and Quality of Care, March 2004

² Aiken Linda., et al., “Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout, and Job Dissatisfaction,” *Journal of American Medical Association*, Oct. 23-30, 2002, page 1

³ HB 1117 2005 Florida Legislative Session

⁴ Fridkin, Robert, et al., “The influence of the composition of the nursing staff on primary bloodstream infection rates in a surgical intensive care unit,” *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.*, as cited in Seago, Jean, “Nurse Staffing Models of Care Delivery and Interventions” page 428, <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/ptsafety/pdf/chap39.pdf>