

MI NURSES Association

Michigan Nurses Association state legislative candidate questionnaire 2017-2018

Candidate's Name **Tom Choske**

Candidate's Committee **Tom Choske For Representative**

House or Senate District Number: **House District 06**

Campaign Mailing Address: **1538 Centre St, Unit 605, Detroit MI 48226**

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Candidate Signature:
(Electronic authorization is acceptable)



Date **3/12/2018**

Please fill out this form and return it as soon as possible for timely consideration by our Nurses leaders. Keep in mind that this questionnaire is only one element of MNA's endorsement process. Thank you.

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About the Michigan Nurses Association

Registered Nurses are the largest and most versatile segment of the healthcare workforce and are the professionals who provide the vast majority of hands-on, direct patient care.

The Michigan Nurses Association is the largest labor organization and professional association for Registered Nurses in Michigan. We work to empower RNs in advocating for their practice, their profession and their patients.

Overview: The Crisis in Nursing

Michigan is facing a crisis in nursing that comes amid rising demand for health care and the aging of Baby Boomers. Patients also come to our hospitals with more complex and severe needs than they did years ago. Bedside nursing is more demanding and dangerous than ever.

Workplace conditions, including hospitals chronically overworking and understaffing direct-care RNs, are driving many RNs out of the profession. This loss of experienced RNs, who not only provide high-quality care but also help mentor and train the next generation of Nurses, is dangerous for Michigan residents.

Registered Nurses are also less able to keep their patients in hospitals safe. As the healthcare industry increasingly focuses on financial goals, patients are routinely being denied the unique, individualized care of highly trained RNs that they need and deserve. The third leading cause of death in America is now preventable adverse events in hospitals; many of these costly, tragic incidents could be avoided with proper levels of appropriate RN care.

It is in the best interests of our residents' health and well-being to retain experienced Registered Nurses and support all nurses' ability to safely and effectively do their jobs. Public policy initiatives to achieve these goals include:

- Limiting the number of patients each hospital RN can be assigned (minimum unit-specific ratios)
- Curbing the rampant use of mandatory RN overtime in hospitals
- Supporting policies that make nursing safer, including patient handling (lifting) rules and workplace violence prevention
- Removing barriers that prevent nurse practitioners and other APRNs from practicing to the full extent of their training and education
- Protecting nurses' voices in the workplace

A. Tell us about yourself.

A1. Please briefly describe your legislative priorities. (Feel free to submit a bio or resume.)

- **Provide the opportunity for all people to have a fair chance to get a job: I will work with the state and local governments as well as private businesses to ban certain 'boxes' from job applications that unfairly discriminate against certain applicants. Together, we will remove boxes such as the ones that ask about felony status to enable applicants to be judged on the merits of their resume and interview, not just a single aspect of their past.**
- **Form a coalition to defend and reclaim our public schools: As a product of public schools, I know that the silver bullet to improving access to opportunity lies in having quality, local public schools. Between the crises facing Detroit Public Schools and the persistent disinvestment in education from the Snyder administration, Michiganders are ready for change. I will work to build support to cap charter schools, close underperforming ones, and prove to legislators that we can and must make education a top priority once again.**
- **Fix our transportation system: Our regional economy cannot succeed if people cannot access jobs. Businesses cannot function if they cannot get their products to market. These are two areas where we can and must act. I will work to improve road funding while also fighting to better regulate weight limits for trucks. I will also fight to improve our regional transit system, enabling workers who don't have a car to make it safely and reliably to and from their jobs.**
- **Establish full parity in coverage for mental health: We must provide people with care that makes the whole person better. We cannot ignore the connection between physical well-being and mental well-being.**

A2. What experience, if any, do you have in the healthcare field? Do you have any relatives or close friends with experience in the nursing profession?

I have several friends who are nurses and I have seen how hard they work to help their patients, no matter how challenging it may be.

A3. Please list endorsements from other organizations:

Progressive Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

B. Tell us about your policy positions

MNA members want elected officials to enact public policy that invests in the common good and that gives everyone the opportunity to health and prosperity. These priorities include:

- Jobs at living wages to reinvest in America.
- Equal access to quality, public education.
- Guaranteed health care for all.
- A secure retirement, with the ability to retire in dignity.
- Good housing and protection from hunger.
- A safe, clean and healthy environment.
- A fair taxation system

B1. Are you willing to work for public policy that embodies all of these values?

Yes No. _____

Please explain.

Protecting workers is the key to revitalizing our economy. We need fair, broad-based growth and not more inequality.

Enabling RNs to provide safe care in every hospital

Registered Nurses are routinely forced to care for too many patients in Michigan hospitals because there is no law that limits the number of patients a nurse can be assigned. There is also no law that limits the number of hours a nurse can be assigned to work.

The result, according to years of scientific research and virtually every nurse's first hand experience, is increased rates of preventable infections, pneumonia, medication errors and delays, falls, and even patient deaths.

MNA supports the Safe Patient Care Act (HB 4629-4631 and SB 387-389). Independent research shows that 80 percent of Michigan voters, across all geographic and political boundaries, support such a law.

B2. If elected, will you support this legislation to establish minimum RN-to-patient ratios (HB4629/SB387)?

Yes No. _____

Please explain your position.

Minimum standards will provide better patient care, better working conditions, and ultimately improve our community's health and our economy.

B3. If elected, will you support this legislation to limit the use of mandatory overtime (HB4630/SB388)?

Yes No. _____

Please explain your position.

Employers who abuse mandatory overtime are hurting their workers and their patients. While there are times when overtime may be necessary in a crisis situation, I support legislation that ensures employers are treating nurses fairly.

B4. If elected, will you support this legislation to require hospitals to report their RN-to-patient ratios (HB4631/SB389)?

Yes No. _____

Please explain your position.

I believe that hospitals should be accountable for their ratios and patients should have full transparency into this number as it can directly correlate to the quality of care they or their loved ones may receive.

B5. Would you work to ensure that this patient safety reform is a top legislative priority for leadership?

Yes No. _____

B6. What other ideas do you have to help ensure the safety of both patients and Nurses?

Overall, the best way to ensure safety for both patient and RNs is to ensure access to healthcare for all. By instituting a single-payer healthcare system in the state that provides universal healthcare, it will enable people to access preventative care and draw down the burden placed on our hospital emergency rooms. Also, through reestablishing a robust mental health system in our state, we can provide specialized care for those with mental health needs and create safer environments in our hospitals for patients and workers.

Giving Nurses a voice in the workplace

Registered Nurses value collective bargaining in part because it is the only guaranteed way they can have a voice in patient care. Collective bargaining agreements give nurses a place at the table to negotiate for safe levels of RN staffing, safer workplace practices, and the resources they need to provide quality patient care. Being in a union also protects nurses who speak out about patient safety from losing their jobs and even their licenses.

B7. Will you support legislation to preserve collective bargaining rights in Michigan?

Yes No. _____

B8. Have you ever crossed a union picket line?

Yes _____ No.

B9. If nurses in your district were actively working to form a union should they be able to do so without outside interference?

Yes No. _____

Protecting frontline Nurses from workplace violence

B10. In the past decade, violence toward Registered Nurses and other healthcare professionals has been steadily increasing, especially in emergency rooms.

If elected, will you support legislative efforts to address the workplace violence epidemic against RNs?

Yes No. _____

What possible public policy solutions would you suggest to reduce workplace violence against RNS?

We must work to establish mental health and drug screenings for patients, foster integrations with local law enforcement, and improve nurse-to-patient ratios in high-risk areas such as Emergency and ICU.

B11. Please explain your views on Michigan's Auto No-Fault insurance program.

I support the Auto No-Fault system, though the rates that I and other citizens in my district pay are abusively high. I will work in Lansing to reduce rates through eliminating 'redlining' (using non-driving factors to increase rates), ensure fair reimbursement rates to hospitals for services, mandating that auto insurance providers provide transparency into how they're using coordinated coverage to reduce rates, and preventing caps on coverage that would hurt citizens' ability to get the services (especially out-of-hospital care services) they need.

Please feel free to add additional comments below. On behalf of Registered Nurses in your district and across Michigan, thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.