

WASHINGTON STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION #1

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND WORK CLOTHING IN THE CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT

WHEREAS, Healthcare exposures to body fluids and other potential infectious materials can be unwitnessed and unrecognized, and

WHEREAS, Infectious organisms have been proven to live for weeks and months on health care equipment, clothing and linens, and

WHEREAS, Patients are at risk for disease transmission from health care workers clothing and hospital equipment and linens that have been inadequately laundered, and

WHEREAS, Hospital laundries utilize laundry treatments determined by degree of soiling, and achieve laundry sterilization by using high temperatures (heat sterilization), long laundry cycles and severe pH shifts (chemical sterilization), which cannot be achieved by home laundering, and

WHEREAS, Clothing of hospital clinical personal is considered a minimal barrier in preventing disease transmission and colonization of health care workers from their patients and health care setting, and

WHEREAS, Health care workers should not pull soiled clothing over their face and head when undressing and therefore should wear clothing that can be removed without contaminating the face and head, and

WHEREAS, Under federal law, the employer is to provide employees a workplace free of recognized hazards and to provide personal protective equipment that is needed in the workplace;

BE IT THEREFORE

RESOLVED, That WSNA strongly support and encourage health care employers to provide and launder health care workers' clothing worn in the work setting,

AND, BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That WSNA, in order to minimize the risk of disease transmission to health care worker's families, home and community, encourage and support policies that work clothes and shoes not being taken out of the clinical work setting,

AND, BE IT FURTHER

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RESOLVED, That in order to minimize the risk of disease transmission, WSNA support infection control policies that prohibit health care workers from personally laundering patients' clothing and belongings outside of the workplace setting,

AND, BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That WSNA support workplace health and safety policies that meet CDC recommendations and ensure employer-provided clothing for health care workers is functional, protective and comfortable.

AND, BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That WSNA educate employers and nurses about the infection risks of pulling soiled clothing over the face and head when undressing and encourage the provision of clothing that can be removed without contaminating the face and head,

AND, BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED That WSNA support enforcement of regulations of health care employers to provide a workplace free of recognized hazards and to provide personal protective clothing and equipment that is needed in the workplace;

AND, BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED That the Cabinet on Economic and General Welfare encourage the Local Units to consider various methods to implement the intent of this resolution.

Resolution submitted by: Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Committee
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