

**WSNA Local Unit
ISLAND HOSPITAL**

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Local Unit Officers

Kathy Corrion	Chair
Traci Thompson	Secretary
Bonnie Abraham	Treasurer
Cathy Wood	Grievance
Barbara Brunisholz	Grievance
Toni Thompson	Grievance
Nancy Stanek	Membership Coordinator

**WSNA Nurse
Representative**

Kate Boyle
(206) 575-7979, Ext 3022
kboyle@wsna.org

WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

*The Oldest and Largest Union
Representing Registered Nurses
in Washington State*



From the Desk of Kathy Corrion, Local Unit Chair

Hello Fellow Nurses,

Several of you have voiced concerns regarding missed rest and meal breaks. As you are aware, a WSNA survey was sent to each member for the purpose of gathering data to help define the situation. The response was impressive and the compiled results from the returned surveys are:

- 2% always get a meal break
- 50% do not get a meal break once or less a month
- 20% do not get a meal break twice to five times a month
- 15% do not get a meal break more than five times a month
- 9% do not get a meal break almost all shifts they work

Reasons for not getting a meal break included: Too busy, heavy patient load, work with seconds, labor and delivery patient with no one to cover, and inadequate staffing.

- 20% do not get a 15 minute rest break once or less a month
- 6% do not get a 15 minute rest break twice to five times a month
- 9% do not get a 15 minute rest break more than five times a month
- 63% do not get a 15 minute rest break almost all shifts they work

Reasons for not getting a 15 minute rest break included: Too busy, heavy patient load, no Registered Nurse to cover, inadequate staffing, and not really done in our department.

Throughout the surveys, it was noted that many nurses were not filling out the KRONOS with reasons ranging from "I forget" to "I don't want to get hassled."

Please take the following steps when you believe you will be unable to take your 15 minute rest break or 30 minute meal break:

- Notify your Charge Nurse,
- Notify the Supervisor,
- If not resolvable and you miss your meal break, and then be sure to fill out your KRONOS appropriately.

We have brought this issue to Conference Committee, shared our information and possible solutions have been discussed. A memo from management with recommendations for taking your breaks has been sent out. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Grievance Corner

Cathy Wood, Local Unit Grievance Officer

Grievance

Grievances are filed for an individual nurse or group of nurses on an alleged breach in the terms and conditions of the contract. Even with a carefully written contract and in the best institutions, disputes will arise between nurses and management. The best solution is to resolve disputes at the source. When an issue arises, discuss it with the nurse in charge who is on, or your department manager. If the issue remains unresolved and/or you think this may be an issue which could be a grievance, then contact your Grievance Officer immediately. We are here to help you and to assure the contract is being followed. If you are unsure there is a grievance, we need to be made aware so your concern can be addressed and a grievance filed if needed. It is important to keep timelines and start the grievance process within the 15 days you became aware of the violation. Contact your grievances officers sooner than later!

You have union representation for reasons other than grievances. If you are being disciplined for any reason, you have the right to union representation. This falls under what is called Weingarten Rules. Take a moment and read your contract, 6.3 Discipline and Discharge. Anytime your manager asks to meet with you and a representative from Human Resources, the red flag should go up and bells of caution should go off. Why would my manager want to meet with me? What are the circumstances? Why does Human Resources need to be there? Am I being disciplined? Do I need union representation? A word of caution, always ask what the meeting is

about. If it leans to discipline, you should ask for a union rep. This is what a grievance officer can do for you. They are someone to talk things over with, sit by you for support, and be a neutral ear. Disciplinary meetings can be emotionally charged on both sides. Managers bring Human Resources to the meeting for support, so why not think about support for you?

In addition, the Grievance Officer, along with the other Officers can interpret contract language. If you think something doesn't feel right, like your pay, hours and working conditions, call anyone of us for help. You can also contact your WSNA Representative at any time for assistance. Do you have a grievance? Is the contract being properly followed? To get answers you are going to need help. Not every problem is a grievance. The grievance procedure assures that a nurse's complaint is handled fairly, promptly, and without fear of reprisals. It is a formal process which includes fact finding, interpretation, clarification, and a mutually agreeable decision by the parties involved. It encourages the raising of real issues and attempts to satisfy the nurse and safeguard his/her rights. Through the grievance process the contract ceases to be a piece of paper and becomes a living, breathing document.

In the last 18 months, we have filed over 8 grievances, with at least 7 of them being resolved at step 1 or step 2. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact your Grievance Officer or Nurse Representative.

Nurse Practice Patient Care Committee

The NPPCC is a group composed of staff nurses and administration that meets quarterly, for 4 hours or more, to discuss issues and concerns regarding nursing practice at the hospital and what we can do to improve it.



Please refer to your contract, Article 16.2 Nurse Practice/Patient Care Committee. This is the first year we have elected 5 nurses from the bargaining unit as per the contract. The first issues tackled by NPPCC was the election of a chair and secretary and developing specific objectives and operating procedures which were reviewed and approved by the Nurse Conference Committee. All minutes for NPPCC meetings are on meditech and are available for all nurses to read. Any RN who is a part of the bargaining unit may attend a meeting of NPPCC. Since the beginning, we have worked on stream lining the nursing profiles. We are also working to make an on line set of discharge instruction sheets available for the nurses to print off at the time the patient is discharged.

As you can see from reading the contract, Article 19.1 states; "The parties agree to continually work toward an equitable system of insuring adequate Registered Nurse staffing to meet patient needs. This shall be accomplished through the Nurse Practice/Patient Care Committee."

Currently I am working with Sue McFarland from ICCU to standardize the skill level, and appropriate responsibilities, for ICCU seconds. This will promote a better work environment for all in the ICCU and will also help the charge nurse know what a seconds' assignment should be.

Remember when questioning the level of staffing on your unit to bring it to the nurse in charge first. Before you talk with your supervisor, take a moment and gather your thoughts. Stay calm and state your concerns in a rational and non-threatening manner. Many times you will find that your supervisor will agree with you and will work toward improving the situation. If you are unable to resolve the staffing issue, an Assignment Despite Objection form (ADO) to document the situation should be filled out. These are found at the main nurses' station. You can fill out the ADO form after your shift, but you must inform the nurse in charge at the beginning of your shift of the situation or as soon as the situation occurs if it is mid shift.

NPPCC does not address conditions of employment issues. These issues would include but are not limited to: pay issues, schedules, mandatory or voluntary low census of staff RNs, holiday or week-end rotation, call back issues among other things. These are issues you would bring to your unit representative or one of the Officers and meet with the department manager first to bring resolution. If you are unable to come to a resolution contact an Officer to help you resolve the issue using further steps.

Currently NPPCC has a survey out polling the RNs about nursing practice and staffing issues. Please return the survey even if you only answered one of the questions. We look forward to hearing from you. The members of NPPCC are Chair: Cathy Wood, Secretary: Linda Haun, Kathy Crawford, Nora Noltensmeyer, Bonnie Abraham, Bette Finn, Greg Marshall, Jeaneen Brogan, Gloria Hendrickson.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Nancy Stanek, Local Unit Membership Officer

Hospital Construction Update

Island Hospital's new construction is right on schedule. Viewing of the new facility is available by appointment. A "sample" acute care room is completed for viewing and to obtain input for the final details of the remaining rooms. Moving Day is scheduled for September. The Labor and Delivery Department will then occupy what is now the ICU while their facility is updated. The ICU will be expanded to part of the existing North wing. This will take about five to seven months to complete.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Nomination forms have been distributed and gathered. Ballots will be mailed later in June and a celebration will be held in July as past officers congratulate and welcome the new officers.

Watch your WSNA website for updates!