

WSNA/KINDRED HOSPITAL

Washington State Nurses Association

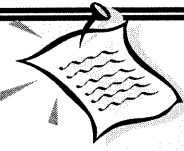
LOCAL UNIT NEWSLETTER

January 2005

From the Desk of

Juanita Heaton, RN

Your WSNA Nurse Representative



WHAT AND WHO IS WSNA

As you know, WSNA stands for Washington State Nurses Association, but who and what is that? First, WSNA is your professional nurses association and is a constituent member of the ANA (American Nurses Association). WSNA represents and advocates for all RNs at the state level while ANA does so nationally.

Who is WSNA? WSNA represents RNs working in the State of Washington. The active participation of nurses within each bargaining unit is vital to our effectiveness. What is a bargaining unit? All the nurses who work at Kindred are the bargaining unit for Kindred Hospital. WSNA has the legal right to negotiate with the employer the terms and conditions of employment such as wages, hours and pay. This process of negotiation results in your contract, which is a mutual understanding between the nurses at Kindred Hospital and the employer for a specific period of time, usually 3 years, after which a new agreement will be negotiated, based on the needs of the bargaining unit.

But, how will WSNA know what the specific needs of Kindred's bargaining unit are? It is through the elected officers of each bargaining unit that I, your WSNA Nurse Representative depend on to learn of any problems the staff nurses at Kindred may be encountering. Without officers, I have no channel for

information, and although the nurse can always contact me personally with questions or concerns, without officers you have no one to go to that is familiar with the unique conditions at Kindred.

WSNA also offers numerous ways in which to meet and network with other nurses throughout the state, develop leadership skills, educational seminars, along with a forum to speak out politically through our Legislative and Political Action Committee. The benefits are numerous and I have only touched on a small part of what we (you the members do). I welcome the opportunity to share more with you. If you think having a voice in the workplace and in your professional organization is important and would like to be more involved, please contact me at (206) 575-7979, ext. 3009.

The Local Unit is only as strong as the willingness of its professional nurse members to be involved and actively participate in the decision-making affecting their daily practice and the quality of nursing care. I look forward to hearing from you.

REMEMBER - YOUR WEINGARTEN RULES

As a member of a bargaining unit, you are protected by Weingarten Rules under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision. When an investigatory interview occurs, for example: your nurse manager requests to talk with you about a potential disciplinary action, the following rules apply:

Rule 1. The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The

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employee cannot be punished for making this request. *(Call one of your WSNA leadership team officers.)*

Rule 2. After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose among three options. The employer must either:

- a. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or
- b. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
- c. Give the employee a choice of:
 - 1) having the interview without representation, or
 - 2) ending the interview.

Rule 3. If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer.

A local unit Grievance Officer is trained by WSNA to deal with this type of situation and is a real asset to your bargaining unit. If you are interested in this role, please contact me at WSNA (206) 575-7979, ext. 3009.

WSNA/Kindred Hospital Committees

The contract, on page 12, Article 13, addresses the agreement between WSNA and Kindred Hospital in regards to the possibility of a Conference Committee and a Nurse Practice Committee. Now is the time to revitalize these important committees. The purpose of the Conference Committee is to foster improved

communications between the Employer and the nursing staff. It is the forum for discussing such things as staffing concerns, ADO forms, and any current issues for the nurses at Kindred. It is to consist of 3 representatives of the Employer and 3 representatives of nursing; the latter usually is made up of your Local Unit Officers. The committee can meet once a month or less, depending on need. Your WSNA Nurse Representative can also attend, and plays an advisory role only. This committee, in other facilities has played an important role in improved relationships between the staff nurses and management.

The Nurse Practice Committee's purpose is to discuss and improve nursing practice in the hospital. It is to be composed of staff nurses elected by staff nurses and one representative from Nursing Administration. The nurses have the responsibility for instituting the Nursing Practice Committee.

I'm writing about this because I want to hear from you and I'm sure you are facing many of the same issues as all nurses and might be wondering how you could go about making a difference. Here are two avenues that could help, but again you must have local unit officers in place to be a part of and spearhead the development of these committees. Remember, your nurse representative and the staff at WSNA are always available with help and guidance. If you are interested in more information, please contact me at (206) 575-7979, ext. 3009.



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It is the responsibility of each nurse to notify the Washington State Nurses Association of any changes in their work status which may include but are not limited to: name, address, phone number, FTE increase or decrease, leave of absence, medical leave, maternity leave, leaving or joining a bargaining unit. This change must be done in writing either by using a change of information card or sending an email to wsna@wsna.org.

The Cabinet on Economic and General Welfare (EG&W) has a policy that states when a nurse is on a leave of absence for any reason, the dues are reduced to 50% for the entire period of the leave time. The dues accumulated during the leave time are to be paid within 90 days of returning to work.

YOU ARE INVITED TO THESE UPCOMING EVENTS and MEETINGS

23rd Annual Nurse Legislative Day

Monday, February 7th, 2005

*Washington Center
for the Performing
Arts
Olympia, WA*



*Join hundreds of nurses,
nursing students and friends
from around the state in an energizing,
educational, fun-filled day.*

2005 Biennial WSNA Convention/Summit

May 5 - 6th, 2005

*Doubletree Guest Suites, Southcenter
Seattle, Washington*

*Don't miss out on this important
opportunity to join your nurse
colleagues from all across the state.
Learn about the important issues facing
nurses today and what's being done to
address them.*

If you are interested, please contact Juanita Heaton, RN, WSNA Nurse Representative for Kindred Hospital Nurses as your bargaining unit may have funds available.

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