

local unit Newsletter

WSNA Local Unit NORTHWEST HOSPITAL

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Local Unit Officers

Pamela Newsom	Chair
Catherine Powers	Co-Chair
Thomas Booze	Secretary/ Treasurer
Cathy Sanders	Grievance
Mary Sweeney	Membership

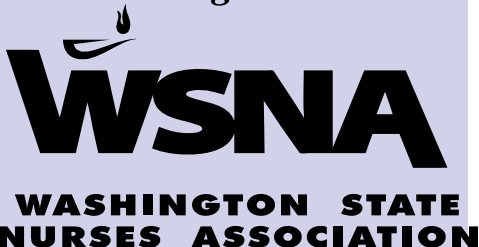
WSNA Nurse Representative

Margaret Conley
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mconley@wsna.org

WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

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



Tell Us What You Think!

Our Pre-negotiations survey is on-line! Please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3NPG23F> to complete the survey before February 22, 2010.

Your input is VITAL to this process!
Let your voice be heard!

If you absolutely do not use a computer, you may request a paper copy of the survey by contacting Margaret Conley, WSNA Nurse Representative at (206) 575-7979, ext. 3034. Leave your name with spelling and your home phone number in your message.

Rest Breaks

Urgent Action Needed

**Help ensure full rest & meal breaks for nurses
(SB 5563, HB 3024, HB 1642)**

Fatigue is dangerous for nurses and patients

Nurses working long hours lead to an increase in medical and medication errors. Full uninterrupted rest and meal breaks are critical for nurses to maintain the mental alertness and focus required to provide safe and quality patient care for the duration of a shift.

Intermittent breaks aren't breaks at all!

Brief interruptions in work – such as charting, conferring with colleagues, going to the bathroom, or getting a drink of water – do not provide enough rest during a shift. Claiming these intermittent breaks are adequate is detrimental to patient safety and nurse wellbeing.

Legislators Need to Hear From You!

Legislators need to know why this is important to nurses and the patients you care for. Hold your elected leaders accountable! Visit www.wsna.org/political-action to send an email to your Legislators today or call the Washington Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 to have an operator connect you to your Legislators. Tell them:

“As a registered nurse and constituent, I know the importance of full and uninterrupted rest breaks for safe patient care. Please support Senate Bill 5563, House Bill 3024 and House Bill 1642 to support nurses and ensure safe patient care.”



The (Un)-Importance of Uninterrupted Breaks

By Thomas Booze, RN

“The following piece of satire is from Tom Booze, RN in the tradition of Jonathan Swift to give you a well deserved chuckle about this vital issue”

During a recent perusal for journal articles on the quality of patient care and missed nursing breaks, this author found there is a paucity of scientific data on whether or not going without an uninterrupted rest break is deleterious to patient care. There is one study from 2004 in the Journal of Nursing Administration which had 393 nurses log their hours, rest and meal breaks and any periods of drowsiness or actual sleep on the job and also actual errors. The study found that there was no correlation between the loss of break time and errors.

So when you are working into your 6th or 7th hour without having had a break and you're tired and your stomach is growling and you think you can barely concentrate on your patients, take heart in the study done by the administrators. You are **actually** fine. You can function **well**, even though you think you are not. The feeling of hunger is transitory and can be assuaged by grabbing a handful of stale chips in the break-room while you hustle from one patient to the next. Bring bananas to work. They can be quickly crammed into our gullets and give a new boost of energy, and a momentary distraction from patient needs to fulfill your own. It may not **feel** like it's enough, but according to some of the scientific literature, it actually **is**.

When you get home, hungry and tired, you can eat a little extra to make up for what you missed during work. It may not be the healthiest thing to do, as research has shown that multiple meals spaced

throughout the day lowers overall blood glucose and helps keep us slimmer. But just remember, that increase in butt size most of us get as nurses is our badge of patient care. We put patients' needs to the front and our needs to the rear.

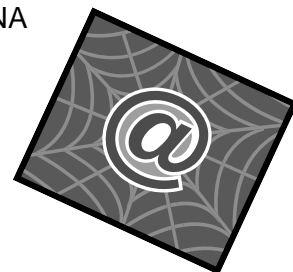
So the next time you feel tired, cranky and hungry, just **Buck it up!** You'll be fine. And so will your patients.

Get to Know WSNA

By Cathy Powers, BSN, RN, CCRN

Do you know that information related to WSNA and your Local Unit at Northwest Hospital is just a few key strokes away? By going to www.WSNA.org you can gain access to a wide range of information on your union, including how you are represented in Olympia at the legislative sessions and issues related to nursing practice under the Nurse Practice Act. Educational opportunities are posted here as well, in addition to current concerns such as information related to the flu, WSNA's position on healthcare reform and more recently links for nurses interested in helping with relief efforts in Haiti. Also, surveys are often posted at the website to gather pertinent information related to the work environment.

As a member of WSNA, it is important to periodically check out your own Local Unit information. All you need to do is click on “WSNA at Work.” Then scroll down to Northwest Hospital under the Seattle Area listing. Under your Local Unit page you will find the names and contact information for your Local Unit Officers. We are your representatives in the Union and represent you during contract negotiations, at Conference Committee each month and during a grievance or disciplinary action if necessary. The information on your Local Unit page also includes your WSNA contract, previous newsletters published and topics pertinent to your work environment such as missed breaks and meals. We encourage you to talk to us regarding concerns that you may have or contact your Nurse Representative at WSNA directly. Empower yourself with knowledge and discover the importance of being part of a profession that makes you more than “just a nurse.”



We Need Your Help Unit Representatives

From the Local Unit Co-Chair, Pam Newsom, RN

So, you ask, what is a Unit Representative and why are they necessary? Unit Representatives are the eyes and ears of the Officers you elected to represent you. There is no way the five officers could possibly know everything that is happening in each department of the hospital on all the different shifts.

The Unit Rep is the person who informs the officers when things “just don’t seem right” as well as when there are possible violations of the contract.

At that point the officers can investigate the situation which may lead to a grievance being filed, the issue being placed on the agenda for conference committee or notification of the WSNA Nurse Representative.

During contract negotiations, which are preparing for, the Unit Representative may be asked to help with surveys, gather information from their co-workers, and keep their unit informed about how negotiations are proceeding. This allows all nurses in the hospital to be better informed about the negotiations process.

The time commitment needed from of a Unit Rep is small. There may be occasional meetings, especially during negotiations for a new contract. The Unit Rep is vital to helping the officers serve nurses to the best of our ability.

One day soon, you may be asked by one of the Local Unit Officers to serve a Unit Representative for your area. Please give it serious consideration as we need your help. If you would like to volunteer now to be a representative for your unit, contact any of the officers for further information. We would like to have a Unit Rep on each unit on each shift, so there are lots of opportunities to help your fellow nurses in this way!

Please say “Yes, I am willing to help make my work place better by being involved.”



Let's Get The Membership Ball Rolling!

*By Mary Sweeney, RN,
Membership Coordinator*

WSNA is the only union comprised of nurses representing nurses. We are renegotiating our contract this year and it is crucial that we unite and recruit new members to join WSNA. When we are united we can send a strong message to our management.

We need each member to talk to their co-workers and recruit at least one new member. This has been a tough year for everyone. Many newly hired nurses decide to forego membership in WSNA for financial reasons. This is a short-sighted approach.

WSNA responds and represents every nurse in the hospital. We all need to support WSNA by being active members.

You are represented by WSNA in Conference Committee, Safe Staffing Committee and many other decision making groups in the hospital. We need your input as we begin the negotiation process again this spring.

Hospitals are making negotiations difficult all over the state, so we need to stand together for our contract! We need you and your colleagues. Thank you for being a member and please help us add more nurses to our Local Unit group by recruiting a friend today!

Up Coming Events

**2010 Nurse Legislative Day
February 8, 2010**

Also!

**February 6, 2010
Violence in the Health Care Workplace
(Call WSNA)**