

**WSNA Local Unit
SACRED HEART MEDICAL
CENTER**

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Local Unit Officers

Patricia Kandradowicz	Co-Chair
Kathy Ormsby	Co-Chair
Paula Thomas	Secretary
Deb Perry	Treasurer
Camille Sturdivant-Daly	Grievance
Vicki Dodson	Membership
Sue Ann Egger	Membership

Nurse Practice Committee:

- Vivian Hill, Chair
- Renee Jones
- Pernille Mayhew
- Camille Sturdivant-Daly
- Terri Patterson

Safety Committee

- Connie Barfuss
- Linda Jones

**Contact your LU Officers at
1-866-305-5612-voice-tel**

WSNA Nurse Representative

Debi Bessmer
1-800-231-8482, Ext 3112
dbessmer@wsna.org

WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

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



Retirement



*Any changes to your retirement program have to be negotiated with the union. At this time, we have not been asked to open the contract and negotiate any retirement changes. WSNA has attended the hospital retirement changes meetings to keep up with everything that is going on. We will keep you notified as we learn more. If you have any questions or concerns, please email or call Debi Bessmer
WSNA Nurse Representative.*

Low Census



We have been hearing several issues and concerns about low census.

Here is the contract language about Low Census to refresh your memory and to remind others of the process:

9.4 Low Census and Layoff. Unanticipated declines in patient care requirements may result in the need to reduce nursing staff. Low census is defined as decline in patient volume and/or patient care requirements resulting in a temporary staff decrease. It is recognized by the parties that the basic policy shall be to use the Low Census procedure to accomplish short term staff reductions. When a reduction in patient care requirements occurs over an extended period, resulting in need for work force reduction or consolidation of services, the layoff procedure will be implemented.

9.4.1 Low Census Definitions. As used in Section 9.4, the following terms shall apply:

Mandatory Low Census: (MLC) Low census which is identified by management as mandatory and assigned by the Medical Center to scheduled full-time and part-time staff. Canceling supplemental and extra shifts are not counted as MLC.

Voluntary Low Census: (VLC) Low census which the staff member takes voluntarily, either by volunteering prior to the shift or volunteering when asked by the Staffing Office/NM/ANM or designee.

Start of Work: The time staff starts their normal shift.

9.4.2 Low Census Procedure. When the Medical Center experiences a decline in patient care requirements that necessitates a temporary decrease in staff, the Medical Center will implement the low census procedures in the following order:

- 1) Where low census reductions are needed, nurse(s) will be assigned to float to available assignments in accordance with Section 9.11.1 of this Agreement.
- 2) On a shift to shift basis, voluntary low census days will be granted if possible within the clinical group, and staff will be floated to areas of need in accordance with Section 9.11.1 of this Agreement. A nurse assigned a mandatory or granted a voluntary low census may not be required to return from low census so that a nurse from the nurse's unit can provide functional coverage (float) on another unit outside the unit's float group.
- 3) As assessed on a daily basis, nurses will be assigned by management to take mandatory low census on an equitable rotation. A nurse assigned a mandatory or granted a voluntary low census pursuant to this section shall be given credit toward seniority, PTO, EIT and Insurance benefits. The maximum amount of mandatory low census per nurse will not exceed the hourly equivalent of

one shift per pay period not to exceed forty eight (48) hours/year. Mandatory Low Census Hours shall be applied to the forty eight (48) hour limit. There will be a minimum of two (2) hours credited towards the nurse's forty eight hour limit for any Mandatory Low Census Hours assigned. Nurses assigned mandatory low census by management may refuse to return from low census for the remainder of the nurse's shift. The hours the nurse elects not to work will be considered mandatory low census and count as part of the maximum mandatory hours as described above.

- 4) First, supplemental nurses, and then nurses working extra shifts (i.e., scheduled on their normal day off) shall be canceled on units prior to assigning a nurse a mandatory low census who is qualified to work on that unit within the clinical float group. On a unit basis, supplemental nurses canceled due to low census shall be canceled in an equitable rotation, unless specialty skill requirements are needed.
- 5) In the event of low census, agency or traveling nurses shall be released before any core staff from the unit is required to float or take low census.

9.4.2.1 Low Census Inconvenience Pay. Nurses assigned a mandatory low census by management shall be notified a minimum of two (2) hours in advance

of their shift. Supplemental nurses and nurses scheduled for an extra shift that are cancelled by management shall be notified a minimum of one and one-half (1 1/2) hours in advance of each shift. In the event such notice is not given, the affected nurse shall receive two (2) hours of inconvenience pay at the nurse's regular rate of pay. Should the Medical Center make a bona fide attempt to notify the nurse of a cancellation of shift or assignment of a mandatory low census within the above-referenced time periods but be unsuccessful in doing so, this pay provision shall not apply.

Voluntary low census inconvenience pay will be administered as follows:

- 1) The Medical Center will make a good faith effort to grant voluntary low census two (2) hours prior to the start of work for evenings and nights and one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for day shift.
- 2) If the Medical Center attempts and is unable to contact the nurse more than two (2) hours prior to the start of work for evenings and nights and one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for day shift, the nurse will be granted and must take a voluntary low census when reporting to work unless others volunteer.
- 3) If the Medical Center attempts to contact the nurse less than two (2) hours in advance of the start of work for evening and night shift and one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for day shift but is unsuccessful, the nurse may take the voluntary low census if no

other nurse volunteers on that unit and will receive two (2) hours inconvenience pay or the nurse may withdraw the request for voluntary low census.

- 4) If the Medical Center contacts the nurse prior to reporting for work, the nurse may withdraw the request for the voluntary low census. If the voluntary low census is granted, the nurse is not eligible for the inconvenience pay.

It shall be the responsibility of the nurse to maintain a current telephone number listed with the nurse's respective department. Failure to do so shall excuse the Medical Center from the notification requirement provided herein.

9.4.2.2 Low Census Standby Pay. The Medical Center may seek volunteers for clinical float group or unit standby for the hours of their regular shift. The nurse who volunteers will be placed on standby for the nurse's scheduled shift and will be paid as outlined in Article 7.2 and 7.3.

9.4.2.3 Low Census Minimum Work. If a nurse reports to work and mandatory or voluntary low census or a need to cancel supplemental or extra shifts is determined after the shift start time, the nurse will be given the following three options: (1) If less than two (2) hours worked, receive two (2) hours inconvenience pay; (2) if two (2) hours or more are worked, receive pay for the hours worked; (3) stay and work for four (4) hours and be paid for four (4) hours work. A nurse who volunteers or is assigned to work such a temporarily reduced shift at the request of the

hospital shall not have a reduction of benefits. Ten (10) or twelve (12) hour nurses and eight (8) hour nurses who work non-traditional shifts who are contacted for a partial voluntary low census day will have the following options:

- A. Nurses may refuse to volunteer for a partial low census day and request a full low census or a full work day.
- B. Nurses who agree and are granted a voluntary partial low census day will be informed at the time it is granted of the time they are to report to work for the remainder of the shift. In the event nurses subsequently are assigned mandatory or granted voluntary low census or supplemental nurses and nurses working extra shifts are cancelled for the remainder of the shift, the notice requirements related to inconvenience pay of this section shall apply.
- C. Up to three (3) RNs per unit per shift may be granted a voluntary partial low census shift.

Electronic Newsletter



Get up to date information now! If you would like to start getting newsletters and updates electronically, send us your email address. Just email dbessmer@wsna.org with your name, facility, and unit and a statement that you would like to be added to the email list.

Local Unit Rep Meeting



Our next local unit rep meeting is scheduled for:

- Monday, June 8th, 2009
- 1700-1900
- Round Table Pizza (In the front room)
1908 W. Francis Ave
Five Mile Shopping Center

Come Talk to Us!



WSNA would like to hear from you. We will be in the Sacred Heart Cafeteria to answer questions and listen to your concerns. Here are the dates

and times:

- May 13th from 1100-1300
- May 18th from 0600-0800
- May 28th from 1600-1900

If you are interested in becoming a rep for your floor, please come and join us!

Unity=Strength

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Up Coming Events