

**WSNA Local Unit  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

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**Local Unit Officers**

Sonja Kvamme	Co-Chair
William Berko	Co-Chair
Edna Cortez	Secretary/ Treasurer
Jeremy King	Grievance
Jean Pfeifer	Grievance
Molly Ruddy	Membership Coordinator

**WSNA Nurse  
Representative**

Darlene Delgado  
(206) 575-7979, Ext 3030  
ddelgado@wsna.org

**WSNA Web Site**

www.wsna.org

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



**Notes From Your Local Unit**



As the cold weather sets in, the leaves change color, the days get shorter and all traces of this past summer vanish, thoughts turn to hunkering down and staying warm.

Anticipation of the holidays – the stress of gift shopping, and the joy (or dread) of times spent with families – starts to take hold. While this holiday season approaches, your Local Unit officers are busy with preparations for the next contract negotiations. The current “Agreement” (i.e. Contract) expires in July 2007. It is expected that negotiations will begin in the late spring.

**SO....What are negotiations?** This is the process where your peers, our WSNA Nurse Representative and our Legal Counsel sit across the table from representatives of the hospital administration and hammer out a new working agreement. This contract will spell out our wages, hours and working conditions. Soon, you, the members, will be asked to share your priorities for the upcoming negotiations.

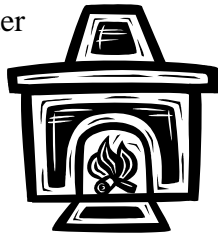
It is our intention to hold Local Unit forums to share information and receive your feedback. Our first forum will be on November 20<sup>th</sup> at the hospital. Also, you will be asked to fill out a survey to help guide your negotiating team in achieving the most fair and competitive contract.

Your local unit leadership is asking for your help. Please consider being a part of the negotiating team. We need representatives from the acute care inpatient units and clinics. No experience is necessary – just the desire to become more involved with your local unit. The team will start meeting after the New Year, going over the information gleaned from the surveys and to begin preparations for negotiations. It's a great way to learn more about WSNA, your contract and get to know your fellow nurses. Contact any one of us if you are interested.

- Sonja Kvamme , Co-Chair – PICU, night charge
- Bill Berko, Co- Chair – PICU, day charge
- Edna Cortez, Secretary/Treasurer - ALNW
- Molly Ruddy, Membership Coordinator - critical care float, day
- Jeremy King, Grievance Officer - ED
- Jean Pfeifer, Grievance Officer – IICU, day

If you are ready to help and be involved in YOUR Local Unit, contact Edna Cortez at [epcortez920@comcast.net](mailto:epcortez920@comcast.net) or 425-361-1215 with your name, phone number and your home email. This is a great way to know your contract, your Local Unit Officers and your fellow coworkers.

So, while sitting by the fire this winter enjoying a hot toddy, please think about joining Children's Local Unit Negotiating Team! You could be part of this group!



*Happy Holiday from your  
Local Unit Officers!*

## **Report from the Chelan Leadership Conference - September 24 - 26, 2006**

The Merrymakers have returned from the 2006 WSNA Leadership Conference held in Chelan. This was the first time I had attended this conference at Campbell's Resort and I had been prepped regarding the reputation of the Children's Local... well, let's just say if it were a beauty contest, we would win the "Miss Congeniality" award. Ahemmm. What did I learn? CHRMC sponsors a mean "apple crisp" during one of the breaks. Sonja and Edna can kayak. Bill and Jean can dance (but are not quite ready for primetime). Safeguard soap is not an appropriate door prize.

Your Children's Local Unit was represented by Co-Chairs Sonja Kvamme and Bill Berko, Secretary-Treasurer Edna Cortez and Grievance Officer Jean Pfeifer. Attendees chose from multiple sessions for the learning experiences.

As the keynote speaker, Ann Rogers, PhD, RN spoke to the impact of long working hours on patients, nurses and public safety. Interesting statistics from that talk included:

- 1) An RN is 3X more likely to make a patient care error in a 12.5 hr. shift vs. an 8 hr. shift.
- 2) For each hr. of sleep < 8 hrs, the chance of making an error increases by 7% and on any given shift, 25% of the RNs report getting < 6 hrs of sleep.
- 3) After 19 hrs. of sustained wakefulness, cognitive and psychomotor performance decreases to a level equal to a blood ETOH level of 0.05%. After 24 hrs of sustained

wakefulness, performance decreases are equal to a blood ETOH level of 0.10%... legal intoxication!

Karen Bowman, MN, RN is an Environmental Health Specialist with WSNA, spoke to her part in a study "Pollution in People" that checked the blood of multiple participants for various toxic chemicals found in our environment. She was typical of most in that she was positive for PFCs (Teflon chemicals), PBDEs (flame retardants), phthalates (plasticizers and fragrance carriers), DDT, PCBs (banned industrial coolants), mercury, lead and arsenic. She spoke to the professional obligation of nurses to advocate for a healthier environment and suggested becoming politically active, one avenue being the "WSNA Nurse Squad."

I attended a session on the grievance procedures. I learned:

- 1) That Weingarten Rights (Supreme Court 1975) states that if you are part of a union, you have the right to union representative during any meeting with management, where you have a reasonable belief that discipline could result? Did you know that WSNA will provide that representative for you?
- 2) That WSNA provides a form, "Assignment Despite Objection" (ADO), which can be used to document your objection to any assignment when you feel the staffing provided is not adequate to meet the needs of the patients assigned to you at any given time. Any number of objections is listed on this form including "insufficient support staff" and "mandatory overtime" including "no breaks."
- 3) Any breach of our contract can be grieved, but must be done so in a timely manner.

Wrapping up the conference was Barbara Blakeney MS, RN, immediate Past President of the ANA. This impressive leader spoke to the changing face of healthcare and the need for political involvement of nurses. She also stressed the need of nurses and hospitals to work in cooperation in order for both to thrive.

I attended this conference as a stepping stone to becoming more involved in our Local Unit. After

27 years of membership, I believe that our Professional Organization/Union is the best hope of advancing nursing as an esteemed, legitimate profession. I learned that WSNA, now the third largest Nurses Association in the ANA, is involved on multiple fronts to advance the practice of nursing and human health and safety. This is occurring at Children's Hospital, in Olympia, Washington and Washington DC.

**DON'T MISS  
THE WSNA Local Unit Forums**

*Date: Monday, Nov. 20, 2006*

*Time: 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm*

*And*

*7:30 pm – 8:30 pm*

*Place: Room - G1026.*

*Featuring: **WSNA 101***

*by*

*Barbara E. Frye, BSN, RN; WSNA Director of Labor Relations, followed by an open forum*

*Bring your Questions!*

*Pizza and Door Prizes!*

The article read:

“The Employer will credit employees with all continuous recent RN work experience prior to employment with Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center whether full-time, part-time or per diem status. For purposes of this Agreement, continuous recent nursing experience shall be defined as experience in an accredited hospital “including temporary employment with another employer, without a break in nursing experience which would reduce the level of nursing skills in the opinion of the Employer.” All prior experience, both months and years will be added together to determine total RN experience.”

While recognizing that this was an attempt to bring parity to currently employed nurses at CHRMC, it fell short (and continues to fall short) in fully recognizing, in an equitable manner, those years worked at CHRMC as a part time employee. It creates a situation where years worked part time at another institution are assigned more value than years worked part time at CHRMC. As you know, per our CHRMC contract, not until a nurse has worked 1,640 hours are they recognized as having a “year's” experience. Our salary step increases are based on “years” of experience. It can take some part time nurses three to four years to attain a “years” experience while their counterparts from other institutions are given full recognition for part time experience.

What does this mean to you? If you are now or have been a part-time RN at CHRMC, you may be working next to new hires who have the same or less experience as you (in terms of years worked) and are being paid more than you. The difference can mean thousands of dollars a year. If you are a new hire who works part-time, this inequity will soon impact you. If you are a full time nurse ever considering going part-time for any number of reasons (starting a family, health problems, bridging to retirement) the current policy will soon affect you too.

## **A Question of Parity**

***By Connie Jackson***

In the coming months, you will be asked to weigh in on negotiation issues of most importance to you. One of those issues will be that of “parity.” I have been banging the drum on this subject for the last four years and I want members to understand what is meant by “parity” at CHRMC.

February 11, 2002 the WSNA membership of CHRMC voted to accept a contract addendum submitted by the hospital administration. The addendum was an attempt to address parity issues and how they impact RN salary and the ability to attract new employees.

There are many issues that demand our attention... retirement, wages that do not keep pace with the cost of living, missed breaks... you know what they are. I write this in the hope of shedding light on "parity," a sometimes misunderstood and confusing concept.

## **Called Into Your Manager's Office???**

If you are called into a meeting by your manager that is investigatory in nature, you do have some rights! **You need to ask prior to the start of the meeting...**

**“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion till representation arrives.”**



These are your “Weingarten Rights.” These Rights are Union Member protections that were handed down by the United States Supreme Court.

**Under the Supreme Court’s *Weingarten* decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:**

- Rule 1** The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.
- Rule 2** After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options. The employer must either;
- Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee, or

- Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or,
- 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. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.

As an employee, you must make a clear request for union representation to be present for the meeting before or during the meeting. This representation can include your Grievance Officer if available, Union Nurse Representative if available or unit/floor rep if available and or a peer that is available to attend. Their purpose is to take notes for you.

Do not refuse to meet with your manager however, as that would be insubordination. Attend the meeting, but do not engage in conversation without your requested representation, only listen and take notes. The moment you begin to engage in dialogue about the investigation, you have literally waved your request for representation. You may be asked to sign something by your manager where your signature is only to acknowledge receipt, not agreement to what is written.

If you have attended this investigatory meeting without representation, when the meeting is concluded, immediately notify your Local Unit Grievance Officers for assistance.



## **PIP... WHAT IS THAT? Performance Improvement Plan)**

*Did you know that it is part of the Discipline process?*

### **What is the role of your Union Representative at this meeting?**

They are there to ask clarifying questions and to take notes of what is being said. They have the right to assist and counsel you during the meeting. They can interrupt to clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics. They can not tell you what to say, but they may advise you on how to answer a question.

### **What should I (the nurse) expect at the meeting?**

Your manager may have written a PIP (Performance Improvement Plan). If it is presented to you.....just sign it. Your signature is for purpose of receipt of the document. If you do not have anyone at the meeting to take notes, when you leave the meeting, call your WSNA grievance officer. By the way, take a copy of the PIP with you.

### **Now... What happens?**

A PIP is a document with statements from the manager of what he/she believe need to be corrected in you work performance. The next part includes statements that summarize what you and your manager/supervisor feel can be done to fulfill the requirements. The last statement should be explicit on how your performance is measured with completion dates for review. This area may mention who you will go to for feedback. This person is identified by both your manager and you. Your manager may suggest a CNS. If so, this person should be helping you.

The manager will add a statement telling you that your performance must be sustained, and if it isn't

what you may expect. This line may state, "up to and including termination." This is the standard line on all PIPs.

### **What if You had no input on the PIP?**

If the creation of this PIP did not include your input, then you and your grievance officer will request a meeting with your manager so you can participate in the creation process. The HR department is committed to seeing that this process is participatory and hopefully the outcome will benefit both you and your manager.

**So** remember, if you go into a meeting ask the question, "**may this lead to disciplinary action?**"

Do not wave your right to union representation..... request the meeting be rescheduled when you can arrange representation to be present.

February 5, 2007

## **Nurse Legislative Day**

May 2 - 4, 2007

## **WSNA Convention**

September 22-25, 2007

## **Local Unit Leadership Conference**

# **Save the Date!**