

**LOCAL UNIT NEWSLETTER**

*September 2005*

**You Are Represented**

We've been busy representing you with Public Health. Here are some of the venues and some of the issues:

*Executive Conference Committee:*

Understaffing and poor recruitment to JHS, productivity levels and how they came to be, inclement weather policies, disaster planning.

*Local Conference Committees:* These are site-based meetings to solve worksite issues in a collaborative manner. We work on problems such as staffing, morale, practice, patient flow, and contract issues. These committees are advisory and we often have joint ones with the Clerical Union – Local 17. We'd like to get more sites active in this venue. If your work site does not have an LCC please call your Nurse Representative, Janet Parks, RN and she'll help you get one started.

*Grievances, Investigations, Loudermill Hearings:* We're hard at work making sure Public Health is in compliance with our contract. We are working on grievances involving Discipline, Pay Practices, Agency Use, Productivity, Training and Schedules. Kudos to Marie Peacock-Albers, PHN our very active grievance officer!

*Joint Labor/Management Insurance Committee:* We continue to represent you in the bargaining for your health benefits for 2007 through 2009. There are lots of new provisions and we've continued to protect ourselves from premium share. Our supportive county executive, Ron Sims, has been instrumental in thinking outside the

box when it comes to benefits and the spiking costs associated with health care.

**Get Involved!**

The time has come to build our local unit leadership team. We have solicited for officers and have a few candidates but are still short for a full slate. Please consider becoming an active participant in your union. We need your ideas, your skills and your commitment.

There are many opportunities to have your voice heard: be an officer, be a Work-Site Representative (aka Shop Steward), join the benefits team. There are even some simple activities we need help with; like building our home email lists. We have several site reps but need a few more. Do you know your site rep?

Please contact your Nurse Rep, Janet Parks or your Officer, Marie Peacock-Albers to get involved.

**Productivity**

We have become increasingly concerned over the productivity standards in the Community Health Services division.

Kathi Landon, RN – Senior Nurse Representative will be working with nurses at the county to address this issue. Kathi will be looking for volunteers to assist in pulling together information. If you have an interest in participating please contact her at the WSNA office, extension 3015.

We will be updating you with developments as we progress.

## Organizing

WSNA has hired two organizers, Cindy Feist and Jason Beauchene. You'll see them around in the coming months as they help us build our active membership and improve our communications. To that end we are asking you to email WSNA at [www.wsna.org](http://www.wsna.org) and let us know your work site, program and a home email address. We treat this information confidentially and WSNA does not sell its email or address lists. Let us know if you have any objections to calls at home or a quick visit by Cindy or Jason.

### *From the Desk of . . . .*

*Janet Parks, BSN, RN  
WSNA Nurse Representative*



There are many facets to WSNA. As you know, it is your professional organization and also your Union. These two divisions of WSNA work to improve and protect the profession of nursing. Among many things, WSNA is your voice in the workplace. Today, I would like to focus on the union part of WSNA. As your nurse representative at Seattle-King County Public Health Staff Unit, I work for this division of WSNA.

The majority of union members continue to look upon WSNA as a service provider (some combination of lawyer, social worker, and insurance agent) to which they pay dues with the expectation that the Union (something they identify as separate from themselves) will take care of their problems for them. Of course, the Union should know what their concerns are, right? But how can we without hearing from you?

For any union to be effective, member participation is vital. Having said that, what does participation in the Union look like? Participation can be formal or informal. Formal participation would involve holding an officer position such as Co-Chair,

Grievance Officer, Secretary, Treasurer, or Membership Coordinator. Being a Unit Rep would also constitute a more formal role. Formal participation can also occur on a more intermittent basis, such as attending a union meeting, voting to elect officers, filing a grievance, or filling out a survey.

Informal participation might include speaking up in defense of the Union, discussing the contract with a new hire, or suggesting to other RNs how the union could help with a problem. Contacting an officer or myself to ask if a particular situation is consistent with the contract language would also be considered participation. In fact, the sum of individual member's informal participation can and does have a significant impact on the Union's effectiveness.

### Contacts:

**Local Unit Grievance Officer:**  
Marie Peacock-Albers, PHN – Renton  
(206) 205-1664

**WSNA Nurse Representative:**  
Janet C. Parks, RN  
(206) 575-7979 ext. 3022  
1-800-231-8482  
[jparks@wsna.org](mailto:jparks@wsna.org)

### Membership Reminder

It is the responsibility of each nurse to notify the Washington State Nurses Association of any change in 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](mailto:wsna@wsna.org).

The Cabinet on Economic and General Welfare (E&GW) policy states, when a nurse is on an unpaid leave of absence, the dues are adjusted to the Reduced Membership Category during the unpaid Leave of Absence period. The accumulated dues payment is to begin within 90 day of return to work. The nurse will have up to twelve months to complete payment of these dues. ***It is the responsibility of the nurse to notify WSNA of this change in work status.***

**Seattle/King County Health Department**

**Local Unit News**

**WSNA**