

**WSNA Local Unit
SEATTLE-KING COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
STAFF**

In This Issue

- Welcome to New WSNA Members
- Local Unit Meetings Scheduled
- Local Unit Officers Introduce Themselves
- From the Desk of . . . Hanna Welander
- Staffing in Jails Causing Many Problems For Nursing Staff
- Can I Still Get in Touch with DOJ Investigators?
- Had a PIP Lately?
- Will This Meeting Lead To Discipline?
- Progressive Discipline
- If I Am Disciplined, Can I File A Grievance?
- Weingarten Rights Cards Available – FREE
- Vacation Donations Are Still Needed!

Local Unit Officers

William Johnston	Chair
Dennis Murphy	Co-Chair
Margit Thomas	Secretary
Gaylord Furulie	Treasurer
Melinda Morse	Grievance
Catherine Ditzkoff	Grievance
Jennifer Zajac	Grievance
Marie Peacock-Albers	Grievance

WSNA Nurse Representative

Hanna Welander
(206) 575-7979, Ext 3035
hwelander@wsna.org

WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

*The Oldest and Largest Union
Representing Registered Nurses in*



**WASHINGTON STATE
NURSES ASSOCIATION**

Welcome to New WSNA Members

Jill Pottratz, PHN, Auburn
Kathleen Driscoll, PHN, White Center
Elizabeth Sympson, ARNP, Float Pool
Alana Murphy, PHN, Renton
Kris Avery, PHN, Columbia
Jennifer Andreson Buchanan, PHN, TB Clinic
Jennifer Engle, PHN, Kent-Alder Square



Contract Mediation will Occur on March 26, 2007
The negotiating team wants to bring you the best contract possible. Please support them by donating vacation hours. See the article about vacation donations.

**Local Unit Meetings Scheduled:
March 21 and March 24**

March 21, 2007, 6 PM to 8 PM at WSNA offices
March 24, 2007, 10 AM to 12 noon at WSNA offices
We will have a full agenda, so please arrive at the start of the meeting. We look forward to seeing you here! We will be discussing contract mediation and more!

You should have received a postcard announcing the Local Unit meetings at the WSNA Offices. If someone you know is not getting their mailings, please have them contact me right away!
hwelander@wsna.org I will see to it that the information is corrected in our membership database.

Local Unit Officers Introduce Themselves



Bill Johnston -- Local Unit Chair

Bill Johnston here. I was recently elected as the Chair for WSNA Local Unit. The other officers and I are representing you in the current contract negotiations. However, outside of contract negotiations, we invite you to inform us of your concerns and issues that you are experiencing at your work sites. Having worked at the Regional Justice Center for the last 8 years, I served as a representative on the Local Conference Committee during the last two years. I have a keen interest in providing quality care to our patients. I also want to protect our rights as outlined in our contract. I look forward in representing you; please feel free to contact me with your concerns or issues. E-mail is billjohnstonrn@comcast.net. *Regards, Bill Johnston*

Dennis Murphy – Local Unit Co-Chair

Dennis joins us as the local unit co-chair. He assists in the local unit chair position and takes over whenever the chair is unavailable. Dennis is also serving on the negotiating team. He is a strong advocate for the entire bargaining unit and has a “big picture” view of what is going on all over Seattle-King County. Dennis is an asset to our local unit executive board! (For contact information, please call nurse rep Hanna 206-575-7979, Extension 3035).

Gaylord Furulie -- Local Unit Treasurer

My name is Gaylord Furulie. I am the full-time nightshift RN at the King County Juvenile Detention Center. I have worked there 8 years now. I am now learning about and serving as the new local unit Treasurer of WSNA. I look forward to representing you and working with Hanna Welander and our other union representatives as we finish our contract negotiations. I can be reached at gaylord.furulie@gte.net or by cell phone at (206) 465-4423. I live close to work in Seattle's Eastlake neighborhood above picturesque Portage Bay. I enjoy participating in Seattle's P-Patch program where I garden by Lake Union.

Margit Thomas -- Local Unit Secretary

Hello, my name is Margit Thomas, RN, and I would like to introduce myself as your WSNA Local Unit Secretary. I have been involved in the health care industry for over 20 years. I have worked at the King County Juvenile Detention Center since 2002. I look forward to this opportunity to be more involved with our bargaining unit. My contact number is 425-883-2847.

Jennifer Zajac -- Local Unit Grievance Officer

Jennifer is looking forward to working with you in her new role as your clinic grievance officer. She has been a nurse for eight years and has worked as a nurse practitioner for Public Health for three years. You can contact Jennifer via

email at jennifer.zajac@comcast.net or by phone at (253)677-1403.

Marie Peacock-Albers – NEW! Local Unit Grievance Officer

Marie has just been appointed as a new Grievance Officer. She has volunteered for many years to supporting nurses. She has also served on the negotiating team for many contracts as well as the current contract. Marie thinks that it is important to support WSNA and get the contract ratified. Marie states that over the years, she has gotten quite a perspective of what the county has done and tries to do. We appreciate Marie’s perspective and experience. Welcome back Marie! Marie works at Renton. Her email is: cymariealbers@earthlink.net and phone is 425-413-8273.

Melinda Morse – Local Unit Grievance Officer

Melinda was a local unit officer in the Minnesota Nurses Association for six years. We welcome her experience as a grievance officer at Kent Regional Justice Center. Melinda is always on top of things and calls whenever she has a contract question or a concern that a grievance exists. She is a true advocate for her nursing colleagues and does a great job of representing WSNA! (For contact information, please call Hanna Welander, nurse rep, at 206-575-7979, Extension 3035).

Cate Ditkoff – Grievance Officer

Cate is currently on leave. We wish her a speedy return!



***From The Desk Of . . .
Hanna Welander, BSN, RN,
Your Nurse Rep***

I have met many of you in my last career as a Public Health Nurse. I worked at North, Downtown, and White Center for almost nine years. During that time I also was the Belltown CSO Family Planning nurse for three years. I

served as your local unit chair for two years and was on the negotiating team for the 2003-2006 contract before I left my county position. As a Nurse Representative, I have worked with many different hospitals and health departments. It is truly special to be working with all of you. I also consider myself fortunate because I understand how the public health system works and know many of the staff.

What I do as a Nurse Rep: I am available for consultation about work place or contract issues, over the phone and in person. I provide support and assistance to the local unit officers and unit representatives at all the sites. I attend labor-management meetings (LMCs) that are up and running. I will be attending the New Employee Orientation until one of the officers can take it over. I also assist your Grievance Officers to file and investigate grievances for you. I attend all investigatory meetings and Loudermill hearings. I also monitor changes in policies and procedures that may affect the nursing staff. I correspond with nurses and management about nursing concerns and any changes that could impact hours, wages and working conditions.

My Goals: My goals are to get out to all of the sites often and stay in touch with you by having brown-bag lunches. I will assist the nurses to set up meetings at sites that are not yet holding LMCs. I also plan to communicate with you frequently via bulletins or quarterly newsletters.

Staffing in Jails Causing Many Problems For Nursing Staff

The Seattle Times published a scathing article on inmate care at KCCF (Seattle Times, Friday, March 9, 2007. "Mistakes, some deadly, haunt county jails.") The United States Department of Justice is also conducting an investigation to determine if inmates' civil rights have been violated. Bill Johnston, Local Unit Chair, and Hanna Welander, WSNA Nurse Representative, attended a meeting with other labor leaders and jail administration before the investigation

began. After the meeting, your nurse rep, Hanna, contacted as many jail health staff nurses as possible to let them know that the USDOJ was very interested in talking to the staff about working conditions at the jail. They were also interested in what barriers the nurses faced in delivering safe, quality patient care.

Can I Still Get in Touch with DOJ Investigators?



Yes, there is still time if jail health staff are interested in conveying their concerns. The investigator who is responsible for collecting documents is Daniel H. Weiss, Deputy Chief, Special Litigation Section, USDOJ, Civil Rights Division. E-mail is Daniel.weiss@usdoj.gov. If you wish your concerns to be filtered via WSNA, please feel free to send them to me and I will pass them on. WSNA also plans to respond formally to the USDOJ, outlining the concerns that staff have brought to our attention.

The nurses have complained to management about poor staffing time and time again, which has had very little effect. Over \$1 million is spent every year on temporary agency staff to fill in the holes. Yet three Licensed Practical Nurses were laid off January 1, 2007, creating additional shortages.

Things have seriously been deteriorating, particularly for the last three years, according to many nurses that work at KCCF. Program managers have replaced the nursing supervisors, leaving nursing staff even more short-handed.

The jail nurses are rightfully concerned or worried because if there are staffing shortages it affects workloads. Also, if agency staff are not oriented or do not work often at the jail, orientation takes away valuable time from patient care. They continue to fight to make working conditions better because they are dedicated to the jail population, their jobs, their patients, and each other. Nurses tell me "I

really like my job, but if we could get the proper staffing, we could do so much more.”

A number of nurses at KCCF are working through the Scheduling Committee to offer management solutions to the staffing problems. However, the committee members do not have the authority to post positions or hire new nurses. We believe that more can be done to recruit, perhaps posting open positions in state publications or newspapers, perhaps in the Sunday Seattle Times, or the Washington Nurse, a quarterly publication by WSNA that goes out to all WSNA members around Washington state.

Had a PIP Lately?

Performance Improvement Plans Are Occurring Far Too Often. We have had many field and clinic nurses placed on performance improvement plans (PIP) because they are not meeting “productivity expectations” or “performance expectations.” The dangers of having a PIP in your file is that if you for any reason do not meet your “quota” it may lead to discipline. This is a very concerning to us. If your PIP is issued along with your performance evaluation, and it may lead to discipline, you have the right to have a representative with you. You have the right to say, “I must contact a representative if this could lead to discipline now or in the future.”

“Will This Meeting Lead To Discipline?”

ANY meeting in which the outcome may or will lead to discipline allows you to “invoke your Weingarten rights” which allows you to have a representative with you in the room, either your grievance officer or your Nurse Representative. You must also be allowed reasonable time to arrange for representation. It is also your choice whether you want representation or not. Some nurses choose not to, but we do not recommend you forgo the option. We are always here to help you.

Progressive Discipline

What is progressive discipline, you ask. There is “predisciplinary counseling”, generally consisting of an informal discussion between you and your supervisor or manager. It may seem casual and informal, but may come back later for a revisit. It can be called “hallway counseling”.

While progressive discipline is meant to be corrective, and to improve the performance and efficiency of an employee, it may not feel that way. That is why WSNA is here to help you work through this process.

The first step of discipline is usually an oral reprimand. You will receive a written statement from your manager or supervisor why you have received an oral reprimand. The second step is a written reprimand. The third is suspension and the fourth is termination. However, your contract also states that the type and level of disciplinary action will be determined by the nature and severity of the behavior and/or performance leading to the disciplinary action. You may be told that you can have a representative present. WSNA suggests that you do. Call Hanna Welander at the WSNA offices.

If I Am Disciplined, Can I File A Grievance?

Absolutely! We always want you to challenge disciplinary actions because there may be extenuation or mitigating circumstances. We do a careful investigation. Then we assist in presenting your case through the Grievance Process. We also write information requests for documentation. Keeping your Nurse Rep informed helps WSNA support you better. It also helps us to identify trends. Hanna will assist you in getting in touch with your Grievance Officer.

Weingarten Rights Cards Available FREE

WSNA publishes Weingarten Rights cards that are the size of business cards. Please contact Hanna Welander at 206-575-7979, Extension 3035, and ask for a bunch for all of the nurses at your site or clinic. Everyone should carry one at

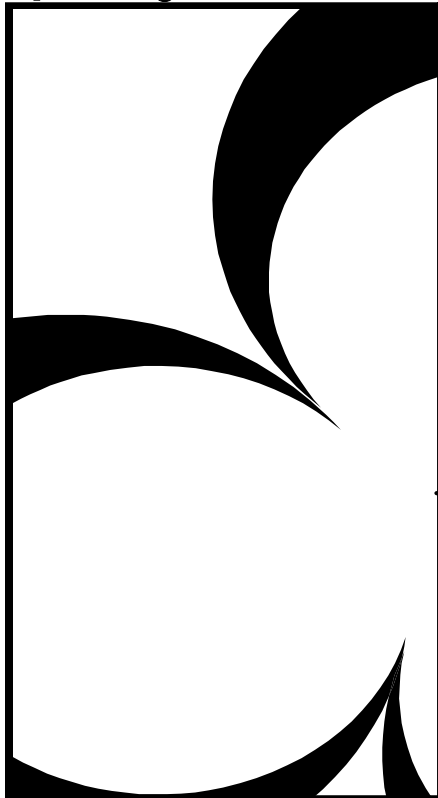
all times. Some folks put them inside their plastic badge covers. Some day, unexpectedly, you may be called in for a meeting that might turn out to be an investigation. You just never know!

Vacation Donations Are Still Needed!

All of our Negotiating Team members took their own vacation time to negotiate your contract. **Please help reimburse them by donating just a few hours of your vacation time.** For your convenience, the form is available on WSNA's website, www.wsna.org. Go to Local Units, then Sea/King Health Dept. Staff and scroll down to Documents. You will see Donation of Vacation Hours. Click on that to bring up the form. The form must be mailed to WSNA, Attention: Hanna Welander. The address is on the outside of your newsletter. The direct link is:

<http://www.wsna.org/localunits/assets/seakingstaff/VacationDonation.pdf>

Upcoming Events



Make your plans now to attend the 2007 WSNA Convention!

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. The 2007 Convention will feature many nationally recognized speakers and presenters, poster sessions, exhibits, CE sessions, association recognition awards, as well as fun-filled events, good food, and lots of opportunity for networking and renewing friendships! Be sure to register early and invite your nurse-friends and nursing students to do the same and plan to attend the Earlybird Reception on Wednesday evening.

When

May 3-4, 2007

There will be an Earlybird reception on May 2, 2007 to start things off so plan to attend that evening.

Where

Tacoma Sheraton Hotel
1320 Broadway Plaza
Tacoma, WA 98402

Visit www.wsna.org for much more information on lodging, speakers, CE Sessions, and more.

Free Workshop The New Safe Lifting Law

WSNA is offering FREE workshops for all interested nurses. Attendees will receive 1.5 continuing nursing education contact hours. For more information including locations and times, visit www.wsna.org.