

WSNA/SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Washington State Nurses Association

LOCAL UNIT NEWSLETTER

November 2005

Welcome New WSNA Members!

Lani Landis, RN
Jacqueline Casipi, RN
Carrie Starkovich, RN
Heather Thomas, RN

Vacant Local Unit Leadership Positions:

We have two vacant positions on our WSNA/SVH Local Unit Officer board.



We are seeking registered nurses who have an interest to step up and become a leader as Grievance Officer and Co-Chair.

Co-Chair: This position will shadow the current Co-Chair until the election in July of 2006.

Grievance Officer: This position will fill the unexpired term until the election in July of 2007.

Training for both positions: Education will be provided for both positions by WSNA Nurse Rep. Hanna Welander and current Local Unit Officers.

We would like to extend our appreciation and thank you to Kaaren Torgeson and Tim Davis who represented us well during their tenure.

Nurses who have an interest in either of the above positions, please contact Julia Weinberg, Co-Chair at 766-6576 or E-mail julia_we@hotmail.com.

1995 Step Freeze Restoration

For nurses that were at Affiliated in 1994, you may recall that in 1994 nurses were asked to freeze their step increase for 1995. This was at a time that the hospital needed some relief due to financial difficulties and poor reimbursement rates at that time. Since that time, your WSNA negotiating team has fought to have that step restored. In 1999, nurses were awarded an extra annual leave day as partial compensation for the lost step. However, this came back to the table in 2005. The interest was to begin anew as Skagit Valley Hospital and to let go of the past once and for all by restoring the lost step. Therefore, in January 2006, the first full pay period will include the lost step. Accrual of the additional annual leave day will stop.



What Happens if a Nurse is Disciplined?

Whenever work place discipline occurs, WSNA looks at the seven tests of just cause.

Seven Tests of Just Cause

As defined by

Arbitrator Carroll R. Daugherty



1. Reasonable Rule or Work Order. Is the rule or order reasonably related to the orderly, efficient, and safe operation of the business (hospital)?
2. Notice. Did the employee receive adequate notice of the work rule or performance standard and the possible consequences of failure to comply?
3. Sufficient Investigation. Was investigation conducted prior to making

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a decision about taking disciplinary action?

4. Fair Investigation. Was the investigation fair and objective?
5. Proof. During the investigation was there proof of misconduct or of a performance discrepancy?
6. Equal Treatment. Have all employees been equally dealt with, without discrimination?
7. Appropriate Discipline. Is the discipline appropriate? Does the punishment fit the “crime?” What is the nurse’s longevity? What is the nurse’s record?

The arbitrator explained that a “no” answer to any one or more of the above questions normally signifies that just and proper cause did not exist. In other words, such “no” means that the employer’s disciplinary decision contained one or more elements of arbitrary, capricious, unreasonable, and/or discriminatory action to such an extent that said decision constituted an abuse of managerial discretion warranting the Arbitrator to substitute his judgment for that of the employer.

HIPAA and Patient Confidentiality

As you all know, confidentiality is an absolute must for all



employees when caring for patients. HIPAA is a federal law that governs confidentiality in order to

maintain the security of patients’ records. WSNA supports a patient’s right to confidentiality. WSNA also follows all laws and works hard to maintain the integrity of the contract. Please take the time to check Skagit’s hospital policy about confidentiality, particularly in regards to the electronic medical record. There is a mandate that hospitals perform random security audits to remain in compliance with HIPAA rules and regulations.

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Protect Yourself

When you log into an electronic medical record, remember that you leave your electronic “finger print.”



Audits reveal what was accessed and how long it was open, including date and time. **Protect Yourself.** Your access should be on a need-to-know basis. In other words, if you are caring for a patient or are anticipating receiving a patient, you may access the chart.

If you have any issues or concerns, please contact one of your local unit officers or call Hanna Welander at WSNA 1-800-231-8482, Extension 3035.

Benefit Enrollment Is Upon Us

The healthcare premiums have increased again. Skagit remains in the Health Care Authority PEBB. You will be receiving information from HR as to what plans you can choose and the costs for the coming year. Group Health and the Uniform Health Plan are the two plans that are covered at 100% for employees. There have been no significant changes to either of these two plans.

Unless you tell them otherwise, HR will sign you up for the same plan. Be watching for enrollment information that will be sent to your home.

2NW Staffing Pilot Project:

At our last Nurse Conference Committee it was reported that the 2NW pilot project had met the goal of decreasing overtime by 51% the first month and 65% in the second month. A key seemed to be the change to the RN charge nurse role.



Charge nurse positions will be posted for all three shifts for intra-department staff nurses of 2NW. Nurses who already are charge nurses will remain in those positions.

A 90-day evaluation of the changes in charge nurse responsibilities will occur.
WAY TO GO 2NW Staff!!

1NW Staffing Pilot Project

1NW began to implement their pilot October 17th. As you may know, we have had periods of extreme volumes, plus sick calls from RNs and CNAs. The plan is to continue the 1NW pilot for two months as well. Let's all support 1NW staff as they make changes to meet the goals of decreasing the overtime, increasing patient satisfaction, and increasing nurse satisfaction.



Parking and Staff Safety

Staff has expressed concerns about safety when walking to and from the hospital in the dark. Of particular concern is having to park at the area churches that are not well lit. The lights in the hospital parking lot had not been functioning.

The hospital assures us that they are committed to our safety and are taking steps to improve in these areas of concern raised. Tim Seaman, Director of Plant Operations, asks us all to address all concerns to him. Ext. 8204.



- Make sure that you use the buddy system when walking to your cars.

- Be alert when walking.
- Do not leave anything valuable or visible in your car. Lock valuables in the trunk before you leave home.
- Call Security for an escort.

Please continue to inform any of your local unit officers of these concerns so that we can bring them again to the attention of administration in Conference Committee. Safety is all of our concern. Thanks everyone.

Nurse Practice Patient Care Committee Needs Volunteers

We are seeking staff nurses from each unit to volunteer to represent your unit. Bring your voice and your ideas to improve patient care and nursing practice.

The NPPCC is a WSNA/SVH contract committee. Right now this committee meets once a month for 8 hours. This is paid at straight time. From time to time, committee members do research projects and special assignments on task forces. This is also paid time.

Please contact your nurse manager and Shelly Van Pelt who is the chair of this committee if you have an interest to serve and contribute to keeping nurse practice and patient care of the highest quality here at Skagit Valley Hospital.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

**Monday,
January 30th, 2006**

Nurse Legislative Day

Join hundreds of nurses and nursing students from around the state. It's an energizing, fun-filled day. Featuring Keynote Speaker Christine Gregoire. For more information, event agenda, and registration form, visit wsna.org

Have you moved or changed your FTE?

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.*

*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.***