

**WSNA Local Unit
SKAGIT VALLEY
HOSPITAL**

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Local Unit Officers

Julia Weinberg Co-Chair
Shelly VanPelt Co-Chair
Jammie Jenkins Secretary
Thomas Nyland Treasurer
John Tweedy Grievance
Linda Warman Grievance
Marsha Leigh Membership
Allyson Watts Membership

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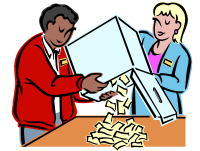
WSNA Web Site

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



**WSNA/SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL LOCAL UNIT
ELECTION RESULTS**



We would like to acknowledge, and congratulate, our elected WSNA/SVH Local Unit Leadership Team for term year 2007 to 2009:

Michelle “Shelly” Van Pelt, RN Co-Chair, Julia Weinberg, RN Co-Chair, Linda Warman, RN Co-Grievance, John Tweedy, RN Co-Grievance, Jammie Jenkins, RN Secretary, Tom Nyland RN, Treasurer, Allyson Watts, RN Co-Membership and Marsha Leigh, RN Co-Membership.

Your elected leaders will continue to work on behalf of all our WSNA/SVH Bargaining unit members to bring the issues forward in Conference Committee (and various venues), enforce our WSNA/SVH contract and support all nurses in meetings with management and wherever needed. Your elected leaders are also part of the negotiating team who will be representing all of us at the 2008 contract negotiating table.

Take the time and thank each of them, for volunteering to represent you, and for doing the necessary work on behalf of each and every one of us. You can see each one working here at Skagit Valley Hospital.

SO HOW IS THE HOSPITAL TRANSITION GOING?

This subject has been an on-going agenda item at Conference Committee for almost 12 months. During these discussions both administration and WSNA have brought issues of concern forward and have had multiple discussions regarding increased JOB STRESS, staffing and patient care flow, to name just a few issues.

What all of us have been experiencing since we “Moved” into the new hospital has not been at all surprising to WSNA; perhaps a little surprising to administration. After all, we did tell them that “if you build it they will come.” Thus we have found ourselves in the midst of a staffing shortage crisis, in addition to a knowledge/experience deficit, both on the CCU/CPC unit and the MPC unit. This was due to accepting higher levels of very acute patients - and having nurses who had not taken care of medical/pediatric patients in a very long time.

Your Local Unit leaders acted on behalf of all nurses when we began to hear and witness (and you have documented) just how unsafe the staffing has become. Equipment that has been lacking or failing has added greatly to an unsafe environment.

Administration called an emergent meeting of the managers of the MPC, OSC and CCU/CPC units and WSNA local unit leadership was there as well.

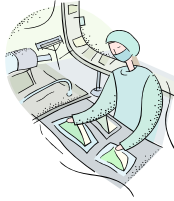
WSNA's interest was to alert management of the crisis and to brainstorm, with management, what could be done to relieve, and/or bridge the staffing shortage gap. WSNA also put management on notice that something had to be done to make the work environment safe and keep the patients safe.

Because you took the time and documented and alerted your managers to these unsafe conditions, WSNA received 18 ADOs in two weeks. Administration had to accept the responsibility of the situation and do something about it quickly. HR was immediately contacted and was directed to step up their efforts of hiring staff and filling the FTEs that were still open since the re-bid process. Those holes left on CCU/CPC needed to be filled. Staff moved laterally to other units' with-in SVH where their experience was needed. Travelers were hired to help bridge the gap and allow for training and education to happen on this unit and with the current staff.

Due to CCU staff shortage, CCU beds were closed and patients were diverted elsewhere one weekend. WSNA was right in there discussing this need and making this decision happen.

There has been a discussion of a temporary Scheduled Standby/Call-Back for nurses specific in their own units. This has to follow our WSNA/SVH contract for rules and pay and there has to be a commitment from administration that those nurses would not be pulled/floated (which has been done in the past). You may already be utilizing this temporary action. Please contact any of your WSNA officers with questions or concerns.

WSNA leadership put administration on notice and made it clear that the issue of staff working 16 or more hours, without rest, was putting both



nurses and patients at risk of increased ERROR and potential harm and that this needed to be stopped. Other alternatives, such as putting strict guidelines around OVT excess has to be developed.

WSNA also put it on the table to have administration and the manger for the CCU/CPC look to increasing the educator position to 1.0 temporarily. This will allow for the necessary education/training for the CCU/CPC staff that is specific to those units. These needs must be met now and not later. Patient safety and nurse practice are of utmost concern.

Today as I write this newsletter, there have already been some actions taken by administration to help relieve, and improve, some of these conditions and concerns. There is still work to be done. However, we all rose to the occasion, worked professionally, documented and did what was necessary to bring the crisis to the attention of those responsible to find a fix now (and not later!). This defines what WSNA is all about. WSNA is not the staff at the Seattle office, but WSNA is each one of us right here at Skagit Valley Hospital. I would like all of you to know that our ability to speak with management and nursing administration regarding our concerns - and be taken seriously and our proposed ideas considered - is due to the hard working efforts of your local unit leadership team in the many years leading up what we are dealing with today.

Our Joint Statement in our WSNA SVH Contract on Page 1 is very important to us and we affirm this with administration each and every year since it's inception in 1997:

Skagit Valley Hospital and the Washington State Nurses Association hereby issue this Joint Statement regarding our mutual interest and our intentions for working together in the future with mutual respect and cooperation.

SVH and WSNA share the following interests and mutual goals:

We acknowledge that all registered nurses (whether clinical or managerial) have responsibilities to base their actions and decisions on sound professional judgment and adherence to the standards of their profession.

We are committed to providing quality care for our patients and their families.

We believe in working together in partnership to meet the challenges of the changing healthcare environment.

We seek to promote a work environment that values open and honest relationships that stresses mutual respect, trust and considerations for others. We recognize that all registered nurses play a vital and indispensable role in the delivery of high quality, cost effective, patient care.

We recognize the need to conduct ourselves in a fiscally responsible manner and pledge to act as responsible stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us by the public.

We have had this pledge in our WSNA/SVH contract since 1997. We believe that these principles, along with our established Interest Based process of how we address issues, helps to guide us as issues (much like the current ones we are experiencing) arise.



We want to thank all of our nurses for your help, documentation, speaking up and stepping right in and doing what is right. Your support and your commitment to your patients and to each other, your hard work and dedication helps each of us to give safe, quality care here at Skagit Valley Hospital. Keep it up! Hang in there! We do make a difference.

WSNA/SVH Local Unit Meeting will be coming on August 14, 2007 in the Shuksun Conference room from 1pm to 3pm and 3pm to 5pm.



Agenda:

- How's it going? This will be an open forum time to talk about ongoing issues and share ideas with each other.
- ZONE vs. MAJORITY shift differential
- What these are, which do we want and how to go about change.
- Roundtable

Kate Boyle our WSNA Nurse Rep. will be here. Snacks provided. Plan today to come and listen, share and show unity and support for each other.

New Updated Hospital Policy as of July 2007

Work Rules and Standards - Employee Conduct HR - 27

Policy can be found on hospital intra-net in Manuals on Line in the Administrative Support section under Human Resources.

Your WSNA Local Unit leaders have been very busy dealing with multiple management/staff meetings where we have had our nurses disciplined for various reasons, which has been based on violation of these work rules. We have been filing grievances at the requests of our nurses because of disagreements with managers and based on the work rule violation.

We are encouraging all of our nurses to not only read this updated policy, but make a copy for yourself and others to refer to often should it become an issue for you or someone you know.

Knowledge is powerful and so your best weapon is to be aware of this or any other policy. This way you will know what the expectation from the employer is and what the rules are which need to be followed.

We remind you that if you or anyone else who is a member of our WSNA/SVH Local unit is called into the office, and especially if discipline may or could be a result, make sure you request right then that you have a WSNA/SVH Local Unit officer go with you into that office. It is always best to have another set of ears and someone taking notes on your behalf. In case discipline does occur and you seek to utilize our grievance process, having an Officer present at the beginning meeting is always best. Our WSNA/SVH Local Unit Officers are here to support, protect and represent our nurses for any reason, period!

***Management has HR!
We have WSNA!***