

**WSNA Local Unit
SKAGIT VALLEY
HOSPITAL**

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Local Unit Officers

<i>Julia Weinberg</i>	<i>Co-Chair</i>
<i>Shelly VanPelt</i>	<i>Co-Chair</i>
<i>Jammie Jenkins</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Thomas Nyland</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>John Tweedy</i>	<i>Grievance</i>
<i>Linda Warman</i>	<i>Grievance</i>
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WSNA Web Site

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*The Oldest and Largest Union
Representing Registered Nurses*



**WASHINGTON STATE
NURSES ASSOCIATION**

Negotiations for our WSNA contract coming soon!

Can you believe it, 2008, a new year? We are now well into our sixth month of occupying our new space here at SVH and this is also our year to negotiate our WSNA Contract with Skagit Valley Hospital.

Your WSNA/SVH Local Unit officers want to thank each of you who took the time to do the survey we sent out about asking what you feel are the needs for this contract year.

It was no surprise to your team that the same top three issues have shown up again as in previous years, as your priorities and they will be the primary focus for your negotiating team again.

We have many new RNs who are members of our bargaining unit. They have not been with us for negotiations before or have not had that experience elsewhere. Your Local Unit officers and our WSNA Nurse Rep. Kate Boyle want to invite you all, but especially extend a real urging push to our newest members, to come to our first Local Unit meetings this year. We need to educate, inform and plan how we, as membership and your negotiating team, will keep you informed, keep you involved and most important, help you to understand the process that we are all about to undertake for our contract negotiations.

You need to know that this year, negotiations will be different from the last two contract years, where we did the WIN/WIN process for all members; the WSNA negotiating team as well as the SVH Administrative Team. We were informed on January 22nd, in Conference Committee, that there will be no WIN/WIN training. For our members who have been here prior to 1997, you may remember some of the experiences before the WIN/WIN process. We now have a wait and see attitude. We all want to work to get the best contract for our membership and we anticipate that SVH will want the same.

It is important to your negotiating team that we educate and provide information about “What Negotiations are and what they are not.” We all need a better understanding of what we are all about to begin. We need to know how to be prepared for all

possibilities that can occur during the negotiation process. We need to know how we stay informed, involved and how to support our negotiating team's efforts.

Plan today to attend one of these this very important Local Unit meetings

*February 28th Thursday
4pm to 6pm
San Juan Room A&B*

Or

*February 29th Friday
11am to 1pm
San Juan Room A&B*

Be Aware and Informed:

It has come to our attention that the hospital has made a statement that they will be following the policies of **Overtime, KRONOS sign IN and OUT and Attendance** at the first of the year. These policies are available to all SVH employees on-line via the intranet of Manuals, on-line under Admin/Support, and then click on Human Resources. Please review these and be aware. Being informed, making sure we are all in compliance and **“following the Rules”** are the first steps to being responsible and accountable as an employee and a professional nurse.

At the same time the hospital is adhering to their own policies, they have indicated that they will be adhering to our WSNA contract language too, especially when it comes to article **7.10 Work on Day Off**: *All full time nurses (1.0 FTE) called in on their scheduled day off shall be paid at rate of one and one-half (1 and 1/2) times the regular rate of pay for the hours worked. Except in cases of emergency, part-time nurses will not be required to work on a nonscheduled day. In Cases of exceptional staffing needs, the Employer can declare a shift or shifts as “Bonus Shift.” Nurses with an FTE of .6 or above agreeing to work such shifts will be paid time and one-half their regular rate of pay for all hours worked on the “Bonus Shift.” The Employer may determine that it will offer double time to nurses picking up a “Bonus Shift” who are already eligible for time and one half on that shift.*

As nurses, we know that our off time is important to us and we can always say **NO** to any additional shifts when we are called. You should not be made to feel guilty to want time off. You should not feel obligated to help out when asked. **If this happens and you have this kind of a conversation with whomever is calling**

you, you need to let one of your local unit reps know ASAP and we will address it with that person directly.

The employer should be in control of the incentive offers (greater than regular rate of pay to us) and as nurses, we can still make the determination if we want to work on our day off or not. **Staffing is the responsibility of the employer. It is not ours.**

Our responsibility is to meet the contract we signed up for, working our FTE agreed to and being at work on time, doing our work according to our practice and standards and, if needed to do Overtime, getting it approved and filling out the KRONOS. We need to be checking our KRONOS time cards to make sure everything is correct. If there are errors on your KRONOS time card, you need to notify your employer about need for change right away so corrections can be made. This is our responsibility as employees.

Mini-In-Service “Nurse’s Eat their Young”

We have all heard that statement and some of us may have been subjected to these kind of behaviors or can recall verbal accounts of other nurses having been targets of these kind of abuses, or have been a witness to this abuse or maybe even a participant of doing just those kinds of actions

As members of WSNA, we are members of ANA and as a member we receive a wonderful journal titled **The American Nurse Today**.

The September 2007 copy had an article titled **“Creating a Culture of Civility” in the workplace (use these 7 challenges to clean up a toxic work environment.)**

As you read the article so much of what they describe, and do not name, is that many of the behaviors and abuses, intimidations and the use of all of these that are described are also in the term **“Bullying”** in other articles and books that

are written on the subject. When these happen in the workplace then it is described as Workplace Bullying.

The Department of Labor and Industries has a web site www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Reashearch for which you can visit. There is information about what is bullying in the workplace vs. what is harassment.

Bullying is different from harassment. Harassment is defined as differential treatment because of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or disability. If you believe that you are being harassed for one of the above reasons, you need to contact one of your local unit reps ASAP. Bullying on the other hand, is often directed at someone a bully feels threatened by. The target often does not even realize when they are being bullied because the behavior is covert, through trivial criticisms and isolating actions that occur behind closed doors.

What is so ironic about these two very toxic work environment experiences is that one has the law to protect employees from those kinds of behaviors and abuses and the other has no law and is not illegal to do either as an individual or as an organization/corporation.

What is Workplace Bullying and Who is Affected?

(SHARP report August 2006 #87-1-2006)

Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which is intended to intimidate and creates a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s).

Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. Bullying includes behavior that intimidates, degrades, offends, or humiliates a worker, often in front of others. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness in the target and undermines an individual's right to dignity at work.

Bullying is different from aggression. Whereas aggression may involve a single act, bullying involves repeated attacks against a target, creating an *on-going pattern* of behavior. "Tough" or "demanding" bosses are not necessarily bullies, as long as their primary motivation is to obtain the best performance by setting high expectations.

Many bullying situations involve employees bullying their peers, rather than a supervisor bullying an employee.

Could the statement above "Nurses eat their Young" and each other? Be Bullying?

Examples of Bullying:

Unwarranted or invalid criticism

Blame without factual justification

Being treated differently than the rest of your work group

Being sworn at

Exclusion or social isolation

Being shouted at or being humiliated

Being the target of practical jokes

Excessive monitoring

What is Corporate/Institutional Bullying?

Corporate/institutional bullying occurs when bullying is entrenched in an organization and becomes accepted as part of the workplace culture.

Corporate/institutional bullying can manifest itself in different ways:

- Placing unreasonable expectations on employees, where failure to meet those expectations means making life unpleasant (or dismissing) anyone who objects.
- Dismissing employees suffering from stress as "weak" while completely ignoring or denying potential work-related causes of the stress
- Encouraging employees to fabricate complaints about colleagues with promises of promotion or threats of discipline.

Signs of corporate and institutional bullying include:

- **Failure to meet organizational goals** (*decreasing/eliminate OVT a SVH example?*)
- **Increased frequencies of grievances, resignations, and requests for transfer** (*how many nurses have left your unit in the last six months? Are you thinking of leaving or transfer at SVH?*)
- **Increased absence due to sickness** (*have you seen an increase of this on your unit? Your colleagues? Or even yourself? Here at SVH?*)
- **Increased disciplinary actions** (*Have you or others been called into the office to be talked to about OVT Performance issues, Attendance or usage of Sick time? Here at SVH?*)

If you are aware of bullying in the workplace and do not take action, then you are accepting a share of the responsibility for any future abuses. This means that witnesses of bullying behavior should be encouraged to report any such incidences. Individuals are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior when it is understood that when the organization does not tolerate such behavior and we know that the perpetrator is or could likely to be punished.

Factors that can increase the Risk for Bullying Behavior:

- Significant organizational change (major internal restructuring, technological change)
- Workforce Characteristics (age, gender, apprentice or trainee)
- Workplace relationships (inadequate information flow between organizational levels, lack of employee participation in decisions)
- Work systems, lack of policies about behavior, high rate and intensity of work, staff shortages, interpersonal conflict,

organizational constraints, role ambiguity and role conflict.

Think about it, have we not gone thru much of the above listed in the last six months to a year here at SVH?

Victims of bullying experience significant physical and mental health problems

- High stress; post traumatic stress disorder PTSD
- Financial problems due to absence
- Reduced self esteem
- Musculoskeletal problems
- Phobias
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased Depression/self blame
- Digestive problems

Each of the listed consequences listed above can be very costly to the organization as well. Costs of bullying generally fall into three categories.

- Replacing staff members that leave as a result of being bullied
- Work effort being displaced as staff cope with bullying incidents (effort being directed away from work productivity and towards coping)
- Costs associated with investigations of ill treatment and potential legal action

We ask ourselves: What can be done about Bullying?

- ****Employee's who are targets need to recognize that they are being bullied**
- ****The employee who is being bullied needs to realize that it is not they, who is the source of the problem**

When we realize and understand that bullying is about control and so therefore this has nothing to do with your performance as an employee

You can take action by:

- Keeping a diary detailing the nature of the bullying (dates, times, places and

what was said and done and who was present).

- Obtain copies of harassing/bullying paper trails; hold onto copies of documents that contradict the bully's accusations against you (time sheets, audit reports, ect...)
- Expect the bully to deny and perhaps misconstrue your accusations: have a witness with you during any meetings with the bully; report the behavior to an appropriate person.

Employers can take action:

- Creating a zero tolerance anti-bullying policy: this policy should be part of the wider commitment to a safe and healthful working environment and should involve the appropriate Human Resources representative. **(talk with one of your local unit WSNA representatives first)**
- When witnessed or reported, the bullying behavior should be addressed IMMEDIATELY!
- If bullying is entrenched in the organization, complaints need to be taken seriously and investigated promptly. Reassignment of those involved may be necessary (“with an innocent until proven guilty” approach)
- Structure the work environment to incorporate a sense of autonomy, individual challenge/mastery, and clarity of task expectations for employees- Include employees in the decision-making process
- **Hold awareness campaigns for EVERYONE on what bullying is. Encourage reporting**
- Ensure management has an active part in the staff they supervise, rather than being far removed from them
- Encourage open door policies
- Investigate the extent and nature of the problem. Conduct attitude surveys

Improve management's ability and sensitivity towards dealing with and responding to conflicts

- Establish an independent contact for employees (**Remember: contact your WSNA/SVH local unit rep first**)
- Have a demonstrated commitment “from the top” about what is and what is not acceptable behavior.

Here at Skagit Valley Hospital, we have a “Code of Conduct” policy which speaks to some of what is acceptable conduct and what is not. You can review this in the Hospitals Manuals On-Line.

We all deserve a safe environment free from harassment and bullying. Being informed and educating each other about these kinds of behavior helps us to be more aware of not only those we work with and for, but also helps us to check ourselves and commit to not be one of those nurses “**Who eat their young and Each other.**” We can stop this from happening right now. We can change this statement and make it something of a memory called to mind one day in conversation; we can have a healthy and safe environment free from harassment and bullying. It is going to take each of us to make the conscious decision for ourselves today to STOP this kind of behavior and/or to report it to those who can help.

THE WSNA BULLETIN BOARD has MOVED to a NEW LOCATION!

Our official WSNA bulletin board has moved to just behind the “Whidbey Coffee” stand in the new facility and is bigger and better than previous. It is located in the hallway right behind the Whidbey Coffee stand, (this hallway also contains service stairs and the service elevator).

ADO's (Assignment Despite Objection) Forms

The Local Unit officers have provided for each unit at the hospital, and also at the free standing units, a WSNA folder that has ADO forms in them. You can leave them, after filling it out and giving the manager their copy, in the same location folder you found them. Use an inter-office envelope for your filled out ADO form. You can also send them/drop them off to Jammie Jenkins-MPC or Julia Weinberg-PACU. If you fill one out make sure you went through the process to get the issue resolved first. We will check at least weekly to see if any ADOs are in the folders for the next Conference Committee meetings report.

If any unit's folder gets low on these ADOs, please notify Julia Weinberg or Shelly Van Pelt and we will get you more

Conference Committee Meets Every
Fourth Tuesday of the Month
3:30pm to 5:00pm.