

**WSNA Local Unit
SOUTHWEST
WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER**

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Local Unit Officers

Shayne Yokum	Co-Chair
Madeleine Ormond	Co-Chair
Patricia Moeller	Vice-Chair
Mary Oster	Treasurer
Terry Joyce	Grievance
Marcia Bryan	Grievance
Eileen Higbie	Grievance
Virginia Lee	Grievance
Christie Riley	Membership

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



**From the Desk of . . .
Your Nurse Representative at WSNA**

There are a multitude of things happening this year, state and country wide that we feel you should hear about. We want you to take action. So your voices can be heard and your input needs to be considered when the decisions are made. As Nurses and voters there are now issues at the legislative and senate arena about safe staffing that we can have an impact on.

The fact that nursing care has a direct impact on patient outcomes is no longer in dispute. There is an abundance of research that demonstrates the critical link between nurse staffing and patient safety. Inadequate staffing is one of the primary reasons nurses' leave bedside nursing. WSNA, working with stakeholders and lawmakers, is proud to have legislation in Olympia (The first is the House Bill 1809 and Senate Bill 5696) that will ensure quality and safe patient care, provide transparency on specific patient outcomes, empower consumers with more information on hospital care, and increase nursing retention at this time of a critical nursing shortage. Go to www.wsna.org and www.wsna.org/legal/takeaction.asp for more information about this and other critical nursing legislative issues.

This will guide you right to the link to contact your legislator, and there is an e-mail all set to go asking them to support this bill. The more nurses that send this message, the more of a voice we have in these becoming laws. How empowering is that?

In an added aspect of this inadequate staffing, we need to look at the instances of medical harm that occur daily in U.S. hospitals, (more than 40,000). Many risk factors exist within every nurse's day-to-day work environment that impacts his or her ability to provide safe patient care. We know that we have more acutely ill patients, frequent patient turnover, high staff turnover, increased interruptions and demands on nurses' time, long work hours, overtime and inadequate staffing are just a few of these contributing factors that affect the quality of patient care. At the end of 2006, ANA participated with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement to endorse its new national campaign to protect patients and reduce medical harm by 5 million incidents. This is the largest campaign undertaken by the health care industry to improve patient safety. What can you do? Go to www.NursingWorld.org "Protect the Five Million Lives from Harm" to learn more about strategies to reduce injuries and errors and to see how you can help achieve the goal.



One in forty registered voters in the state of Washington is a Nurse. What a voice we have! Let us put our voices to good use and make an impact on healthcare and patient safety. It truly is in our court now and instead of questioning how to do it, we now have the power to make it happen.

As we start the New Year, you will also notice that there is an additional small amount coming out of your membership dues. This is the money that is being allocated to the UAN to hire organizers. There are still many nurses out there that are not receiving the benefit of being unionized, and our goal is to help that happen. All the dues that you pay and where they go were broken down and explained in the Jan/Feb Washington Nurse.

Make your Voice heard this month and next month by e-mailing your legislators to ask them to vote the House Bill 1809 and Senate Bill 5696 into law.

In Solidarity,

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A Letter from Shayne Yocum, Local Unit Co-Chair!

There seems to be some considerable misunderstanding and confusion regarding the bargaining unit's raises and merit raises effective this year. Just to make an attempt to clarify this issue, WSNA negotiated for a **guaranteed** raise for all RNs with the last contract. That raise was to be 11% over the length of the contract with 5% being awarded in October of 2005, 3% being awarded in January of 2007 (now) and 3% being awarded in January of 2008. The merit raise remains a subjective amount based on your particular manager, unit and evaluation. I realize that the contract is confusing, but if you refer to 13.1.6.1 on page 29 of the current contract, it states how the merit increases will be allotted. The example that indicates an RN who receives 1.5 points on the yearly evaluation will get a merit increase of 3% is entirely due to the guaranteed raises that were negotiated by WSNA. It is the other 2% that the hospital is adding as they see fit based on the number of points each nurse gets on the evaluation. No RN can receive less than 3%

and the maximum raise that the facility is offering is 5%. Merit raises must be considered on a bell curve. If some nurses are to get the most, which in this case is 2% more, most of the nurses must expect to get significantly less than that. There is a finite amount of money designated for raises, and not every employee can expect to get the maximum raise. The very reason that the March reslotting is necessary is largely due to the numbers of nurses who have not been kept up to scale because of minimal merit raises in the past.

As a member of the WSNA negotiating team and your Co-Chair, I would like to see merit raises eliminated entirely and guaranteed raises replace them. That would leave no room for doubt and we would all know exactly how much we could expect with every increase. With merit raises, you have to wait for the evaluation and hope your manager favors you with a high position on the bell curve. Even with that, you have to realize that your raise might come at the expense of several of your co-workers.

I hope that I have cleared up some of the confusion. Our next negotiations are coming up by the end of this year. We would like to ask for better wages, benefits and working conditions for all members of the bargaining unit, but without adequate membership, that is unlikely to occur. If you are a dues paying member, find out who isn't and start recruiting. If you aren't a dues paying member, join now and participate in the efforts to make SWMC the organization we all want it to be. It requires **ALL OF US** and the minority that presently comprises the membership is inadequate for the demands to come. We can demand better compensations and benefits if we all stand together, but we cannot do it separately. It is well worth your commitment and the hour and a half of your time that will pay for your monthly dues. Deciding not to be a part of WSNA at SWMC is comparable to attending a potluck without a dish to share.

*ShR. Abelson, "Companies Turn to Grades, and Employees Go to Court," New York Times, March 19, 2001, pA1;
D. Hones, "More Firms Cut Workers Ranked at Bottom to Make Way for Talent," USA Today, May 30, 2001, p1B;
D. Sears & D. McDermott, "The Rise and Fall of the Rank and Yank," Information Strategy, Spring 2003, p6.
These were included in a book called "Organizational Behavior" 11th Edition by Stephen P. Robbins (2005).*



Just A Thought . . .

If you're looking for a New Year's goal that will actually help your company's bottom line, here's one: reduce employee turnover.

The top reason employees leave a company isn't for more money. "It's because of poor management." says Cindy Ventrice, a Costco member and author of *Make Their Day! Employee Recognition That Works* (Berrett-Koehler, 2003). "Reduce burnout and you reduce turnover."

Taking steps to keep employees around isn't complex or expensive. Ventrice offers these easy tips:

- Clarify and communicate your company values and goals. Employees can handle challenges best

when they understand the purpose and value of their work.

- * Reward behaviors that promote your organization's values and goals. Not only do employees want to do work that is of value, they want to be valued for their work.
- * Offer employees control over how they accomplish goals. The worst burnout occurs in jobs that have high responsibility and low control. Provide the assignment and whenever possible, let the employee decide how it gets done.

Ventrice offers a simple equation for the efficacy of her advice: "One enthusiastic employee working eight hours will accomplish more than two burned out employees putting in 12-hour days."

Southwest Medical Center/Washington State Nurses Association

It is time for another Local Bargaining Unit Meeting!

March 6th, 5pm-8pm in Room 5

Bring your questions about raises, evaluations, code of conduct and any other issues you may have.

Come hear about what we as nurses have the power to do right now about staffing and patient safety.

Do you know that if you are called into your manager's office for any investigation that may lead to discipline, you have the RIGHT to have a union rep with you to take notes and be a witness?

Do you know that your contract expires in a year, and we will be starting prep in about 6 months? Is anyone interested in being a part of that process? We need MORE Dues paying members if we want a stronger voice here.

Come to the meeting!!!!

