

WSNA/SPOKANE VETERANS HOME

Washington State Nurses Association

LOCAL UNIT NEWSLETTER

August 2005

Officers

Chair:	Gerald Gifford
Vice Chair:	Vacant
Secretary/Treasurer:	Vacant
Grievance Officer:	Vacant
Member at Large:	Vacant

If you are willing to step up and volunteer to be a local unit officer, please contact your officer or Debi Bessmer, Nurse Rep. We will sign you up!

WSNA Nursing Representative:

Deborah Bessmer, BSN, RN

1-800-231-8482 Ext. 3112

dbessmer@wsna.org

Local Unit Organization:

- Chair/Vice Chair are co-coordinators of the local unit.
- Secretary keeps the records; communication.
- Treasurer monitors local unit funds.
- Grievance Officers enforces the contract.
- Membership Chair keeps membership lists accurate and does orientation of new hires.
- Local Unit Reps are the face of WSNA, resource and communications.
- Nurse Rep-WSNA staff assigned to educate, advice, represent and advocate for the local unit.

Mandatory Overtime

Mandatory overtime is continuing to be a big issue. We all know that mandatory overtime causes an:

- 1) Increase in medication errors,
- 2) Decrease in safe, quality patient care,
- 3) Decrease in patient satisfaction,
- 4) Increase in length of stay,
- 5) Increase in mortality and morbidity,
- 6) Decrease in recruitment of new nurses,
- 7) Decrease in retention of nurses, and
- 8) Increase in legal liability issues against nurses.

WSNA and your local officers are very dedicated to continuing this fight. We will continue to include this as an agenda issue at the labor-management meetings. Please continue to fill out the WSNA Assignment Despite Objections (ADO) forms when you are given a mandatory overtime and mark the forced/mandatory overtime objection. We can internally keep track of how often this is really happening. Thanks for your cooperation.

To do list:

- ✓ Read - Be informed: post cards, newsletters, ANA, UAN, WSNA web site, Washington Nurse, One Strong Voice, and American Nurse.
- ✓ Attend educational offerings - Bring a friend.
- ✓ Communicate your concerns - Give us input.
- ✓ Get involved! There is a place for everyone.
- ✓ Believe!!!

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Weingarten Rules

Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:

- **Rule 1:** The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.
- **Rule 2:** After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose among three options. The employer must either:
 - a. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or
 - b. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
 - c. Give the employee a choice of:
 - 1) having the interview without representation, or
 - 2) ending the interview.
- **Rule 3:** If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.

New Contract

The new contract is out. You should be receiving yours soon.

You can now look at your contract online at:

www.wsna.org Click on local units → Spokane Veterans Home → current contract.

Look it over and get familiar with it. This is what governs your employment at the veteran's home. If you have any questions or concerns notify your local unit officer or Debi Bessmer, Nurse Rep.



It doesn't cost to be a union member – it pays!

Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) Forms

Fill out an ADO form if you have a disagreement to your nursing assignment. You are still accepting the assignment and providing care you just have objections to it. The form has a list of the objections such as:

- Not oriented to this unit/case load.
- Inadequate nurse to patient ratios for patient acuity based on clinical judgment of the Professional Nurse.
- Insufficient support staff (e.g. unit secretaries, unlicensed personal) which requires the Professional Nurse to assume these duties as well.
- Charge Nurse unable to perform. Charge Nurse duties, secondary to increase patient care assignment.
- Forced/Mandatory Overtime, including no breaks (e.g. meal, rest).

There is a statement at the bottom of the form that states *“In my professional opinion, the staffing provided is not adequate to meet the needs of the patients assigned to me at this time. Please be aware that while I will do all that I can to ensure safe and proper care for my patients, I fear that my efforts and those of the staff may not be sufficient. Therefore, I am informing you that I cannot take responsibility for any error or incidents that take place as a result of this unsafe condition created by inadequate staffing, systems/equipment failures.”* This form may help to protect your license in the future. If you have any questions or you are being intimidated not to fill these out please don't hesitate to contact Debi Bessmer, WSNA Nurse Rep.

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Medication Pass

If you are unable to complete your medication pass because of staffing or other occurrences, you can protect yourself by doing the following:



- Notify your supervisor and/or manager
- Only chart what you have given

- Fill out an assignment despite objection form and mark the appropriate objections.

If you have any questions or concerns contact Debi Bessmer, BSN, RN, Nurse Rep WSNA at 1-800-231-8482, Ext. 3112 or dbessmer@wsna.org

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Annual Leadership Development Conference

Lake Chelan, WA

September 25 – 27, 2005



Please see WWW.WSNA.org for a registration form.

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.*

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