

May 2006

**WSNA Local Unit
St. Joseph Hospital-
Bellingham**

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Local Unit Officers

Judith Hammer	Co-Chair
Janie Carter	Co-Chair
Sarah Newell	Co-Secretary
Kathryn Goss	Co-Secretary
Linda Smallwood	Treasurer
Ina O'Donnell	Co-Grievance
Patricia Lombard	Co-Grievance
Julie Rose	Co-Membership
Tracy Pullar	Co-Membership

**WSNA Nurse
Representative**

Hanna Welander
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WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

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



**WASHINGTON STATE
NURSES ASSOCIATION**

New Officer

Welcome to New WSNA Officer! Julie Rose from CRU has been appointed to be Co-Membership officer. WELCOME!

Wanted! Health and Safety Officer

We still need a Health and Safety Committee officer. If you are interested, please contact any Local WSNA Officer.

Wanted! Unit Reps

The following units need unit reps: CCL; Multi Track Unit--South campus; 1st OBs; OR; MCU and 3rd Surgical.

Staffing Concerns?

Are You Filling Out Staffing Concern Forms? With all the changes going on in the hospital, it is more important than ever for nurses to fill out staffing concern forms and incident reports. These are protected processes. This means that if you use either the staffing concern form or an incident form you are protected from retaliation. The hospital has a No-Tolerance policy for any kind of retaliation. The process for staffing concerns is listed in the contract under article 18.4, see below. The only way we can show what changes need to take place is to: Document, document, document!



18.4 Individual Staffing Concerns. *A nurse questioning the level of staffing on her/his unit shall communicate this concern to her/his immediate supervisor, who will utilize available management resources to attempt to resolve the situation. The nurse shall use the appropriate form to be developed and agreed to between the parties to document the situation. Within 60 days of the date of ratification of this Agreement, the Staffing Committee will develop mutually agreeable forms to be utilized by nurses raising individual staffing concerns. The Employer shall provide a written response to nurses who have submitted written forms. All such forms and written responses shall be compiled and reviewed by the Staffing Committee on a regular basis.*

18.4.1 *A nurse, upon identifying a patient care concern, shall report the concern immediately to her/his nurse team leader or the nurse manager on duty. If no resolution occurs at this level, then the nurse shall report the matter to a patient care director.*



From The Desk Of . . .

Hanna Welander RN

Are You Missing Breaks and Lunches?

Everyone knows that you are entitled to take rest-breaks (15 minutes) and meal-breaks (30 minutes). Could you ever conceive that when working, nurses could no longer eat, drink, or void? Well, that's not the way it is supposed to be. In fact, studies have shown that nurses that don't take rest and meal breaks experience more burnout. We can't afford to lose you from the profession! We are asking you to insist to get off the unit for your meal breaks. If a rest break is offered, take it! If someone comes to you and asks you to take your lunch/dinner break, take it! According to Washington State Labor and Industries, a business is not required to pay for meal periods if workers are free from any duties for their ENTIRE meal period. However, workers must be paid during their meal breaks when:

- They are required or allowed to remain on duty.
- They are required to be on-call at the business premises or designated worksite to be available to return to duty even if they are not in fact called back to duty.
- They are called back to duty during their meal period even though they normally are not on call during the meal period.

How to find Staffing Concern Forms Online:

Go to Crossroads, click on "Patient Care Division" then "Staff Resource Column," and then click on "Staffing Concerns Form."

A copy will go to your manager and to Judy Hamner, Staffing Committee Chair. Judy Hamner will forward a copy to Hanna Welander, Nurse Representative at WSNA.



Accessing Hospital Online WSNA Contract

Go to Microsoft Outlook

Public Folders

All Public Folders

Whatcom

Human Resources

WSNA Contract

(To access the Contract from WSNA Website, go to www.wsna.org, click on Local Units, and then on St. Joseph Hospital Bellingham.)



Medical Benefits Eligibility Changes

Hospital has proposed changing health benefit eligibility for Per Diem RNs and RNs who work less than 0.5 FTE. In the past, nurses and other employees that worked extra hours became eligible for medical benefits if they worked up to the number of hours that would equal a benefited position (0.5-0.7 FTE). Nurses who are Per Diem or work less than a 0.7 FTE will no longer receive the paid medical premium even if they work hours equaling 0.5-0.7. WSNA did not agree with this change and asked the hospital to wait until negotiations to make this change. However, they did not agree and plan to discontinue this as of July 1, 2006. We are asking for your help. If you have been affected, please contact Hanna Welander, WSNA Nurse Rep, at 800-231-8482, ext. 3035.

WE WON! Grievances

Grievances: WSNA won Yvonne Shull's Breach of Confidentiality termination grievance. Yvonne was financially compensated for wrongful termination. Unfortunately for us, Yvonne chose not to return to the hospital and is now working in Seattle.

Because of WSNA's efforts, the hospital continued to work on their process. They took a look at the procedures that occurred after a random audit revealed questionable access. Our hospital's breach of confidentiality process has changed significantly. Nurses are now sent a "Security Authorization Audit." When you receive this, please fill it out as directed and send them back to your manager. Many NTLs are in multiple patient records. If you are questioned about that, please state that you were

working as NTL that day. If anyone has problems, contact Hanna Welander.

Ongoing Grievances:

- CRU – posting grievance
- CBC – posting grievance
- CBC- 10 hour shift /8 hour shift grievance
- Med Surg – Staffing changes grievance

Thanks to All that Attended Meetings!

In April WSNA Local Unit officers held four days of information gathering meetings with the RNs for the grievance filed about staffing changes. Nurses talked about the changes on their floors and the problems these changes are creating. The nurses offered potential solutions to resolve these problems. Thanks to all the nurses who gave their input.


WSNA met with Faye Lindquist, our new VP of patient care services, Sharon Rutherford and Cindy Preston, on Friday, April 28, 2006, to discuss this grievance. We presented all of your concerns, complaints and solutions at this meeting. Changes are already taking place. Remember that these changes take time. Our strong message is that nurses want to give quality, safe patient care. Hanna Welander, WSNA Nurse Rep, will be sending out more details from that meeting shortly.

WSNA Local Unit Officers will be meeting May 8th to start talking about the upcoming negotiations; Surveys should be out to all WSNA Nurses by June. Please take time to fill the survey out and return it so we can negotiate the issues that matter to you.

Save the date!

September 25-26, 2006
Leadership Development
Conference

May 2-4, 2007
Biennial WSNA
Convention



Happy Nurses Week!
May 6th - 12th

