

local unit Newsletter

**WSNA Local Unit
UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON MEDICAL
CENTER**

In This Issue

- Notes From The Chair . . .
- Did You Know?
- Staffing Committee Off to a Start!
- Safe Staffing Education
- What are ADO Forms?
- Announcing the WSNA Staffing Survey
- A Note from your WSNA Staff Team
- UWMC - RNs Helping RNs- Local Unit Officer Elections
- Preserving Your Education Funds

Local Unit Officers

Steve Krauss	Chair
Harry James	Treasurer
Anita Stull	Secretary
Open	Grievance
Kathy Higgins	Grievance
Open	Membership

WSNA Nurse Representative

Christine Himmelsbach
(206) 575-7979, Ext 3034
chimmelsbach@wsna.org

WSNA Web Site

www.wsna.org

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



Notes From The Chair . . .

By Steve Krauss, RN, CNOR, UWMC Local Unit Chair

In September, we filled the sidewalk from the UWMC sign to Montlake Avenue with nurses who sent a LOUD and VISIBLE signal to management that we demand a competitive contract. Thanks to all who came to the informational picketing, and to those who couldn't attend but voiced support. More thanks to those drivers who honked their horns in support of the nurses and patients at UWMC – if you were at work, you probably heard the noise we generated. We were there for ALL of the classified RN2s and RN3s at UWMC, donating our day-off time on the first warm, sunny morning in many weeks to WSNA's effort to get a competitive contract for everyone. We followed that great event with a candlelight vigil. With our contract talks in mediation, your efforts and show of support made the difference. The publicity generated by these events, coupled with your many e-mail messages and phone calls to UWMC management pushed the negotiations in a direction favorable to our bargaining unit.

We were able to agree on and ratify a good contract for all classified RN2s and RN3s. Some of the highlights include:

- ✓ 7.5% pay raise over 2 years
- ✓ Added seniority steps at the top of the pay scale
- ✓ An increase in Charge Nurse premium
- ✓ NO change to current Rest Between Shift language
- ✓ For Education benefits, 0.9 FTE and above will be considered full-time and will not be pro-rated
- ✓ A grievance regarding pay for shop steward activities was resolved favorably to the local unit, and avoided the costly step of Arbitration
- ✓ A compromise on FMLA changes allowing RNs to RETAIN 80 hours of annual leave while on FMLA, rather than management's proposal to 'burn' all leave time before using LWOP
- ✓ Continuation of the Surgery and Recovery Subcommittee – this keeps an active line of communication open between WSNA representatives and the Surgical Services department

The new contract takes effect July 1, 2009, although items related to pay for shop steward activities took effect with ratification of the agreement.



We also recently selected the staff nurse representatives for the Staffing Committee. These dedicated volunteers will represent all of the staff RNs at UWMC. Please see the accompanying article about the staffing committee and its membership.

If you aren't a member, it's time to join! You – the members – have been the best tool in persuading management to give us a competitive contract. Members speak volumes at the bargaining table and between negotiation years. Your membership gives us strength when we work to resolve workplace issues with management at the Conference Committee meetings. Membership applications may be printed by going to the www.wsna.org website. If you need a pre-printed application we will get one to you – just let us know!

*Steve Krauss, RN, CNOR
Chair, UWMC Local Unit WSNA*

Did you know?

Your WSNA/UWMC 2009-2011 Negotiating Team Members were:

Steve Krauss, RN, OR, LU Chair, catbert@oz.net
Harry James – RN, OR, LU Treasurer –
jamesharry24@comcast.net
Anita Stull – RN, 7 North Inpatient Psych - LU
Secretary - anitastull@comcast.net
Sonia Nelson, RN, 8N - Inpatient Rehab -
Soniasn7@aol.com
Sherri Burch, RN, 6S OB/GYN - burch@tscnet.com
Kathy Higgins, RN, PACU - lamiken@msn.com
Christine Himmelsbach - WSNA Nurse Representative -
chimmelsbach@wsna.org
Linda Machia, JD, General Counsel -
lmachia@wsna.org

Staffing Committee Off to a Start!

The Safe Nurse Staffing Legislation (House Bill 3123) became law in 2008.

Highlights of the new law will include:

- Each hospital, by September 2008, must establish a nurse staffing committee composed of at least half direct care nurses. This committee will develop, oversee and evaluate a nurse staffing plan for each unit and shift of the hospital based

on patient care needs, appropriate skill mix of registered nurses and other nursing personnel, layout of the unit, and national standards/recommendations on nurse staffing.

- If the staffing plan developed by the staffing committee is not adopted by the hospital, the CEO must provide a written explanation of the reasons why, to the committee.
- The staffing information must be posted in a public area and must include the nurse staffing plan and the nurse staffing schedule, as well as the clinical staffing relevant to that unit. It must be updated at least once every shift and made available to patients and visitors upon request.

Ensuring safe nurse staffing has been a top priority for WSNA for the past several years. A growing body of research confirms what we all know, that the care provided by registered nurses has a direct impact on quality of hospital care and patient safety. Nursing care requires continuous patient assessment, critical thinking and expert judgment, advocating on behalf of our patients, and educating patients and their families. Those activities are the essence of nursing care and are critical factors in avoiding preventable complications, injuries and avoidable deaths.

Your WSNA/UWMC Local Unit Leadership asks you to join them in Congratulating and thanking the Staff Nurse Committee Members who have committed to serve and represent all the RN2 and RN3's in the bargaining unit. Members were selected to reflect key patient populations at UWMC including med/surg-oncology, critical care, perinatal, surgical services and ambulatory. The dedicated RN Staffing Committee members are:

Trish Berry-Bell, RN2, PACU
Tana Irish, RN3, 8NE HSCT Transplant
Sonia Nelson, RN2, 8N Rehabilitation
Theresa Ismach, RN2, MICC
Rusti Nelson-Tankus, RN2, Radiology

Hospital Administration Representatives are:

Sherry Del Bene, Director, Patient Care Services (CHAIRPERSON)

Christine Larsen, Nurse Manager, 7N Psychiatry

Keri Nasenbeny, Nurse Manager, 5E Critical Care

Cindy Sayre, Clinical Nurse Specialist

Sue Theiler, Nurse Manager, 6SE Orthopaedics/Ophthalmology

Safe Staffing Education

WSNA will be providing continued support and training for the Staffing Committee staff nurse members. Upcoming events include a workshop for the implementation of the new law. All RN2 and RN3's, as well as the RN Staff nurse committee members are encouraged to attend.

Join us for a morning full of useful information and networking that will help us work together to staff units appropriately:

WSNA Nurse Staffing Committee Education Program

Saturday - November 8

9:30am-12:30pm

Ray's Boathouse

6049 Seaview Avenue NW

To register for this FREE program, call

1-800-231-8482, Ext. 0 or call 206-575-7979, Ext.0



What every

UWMC RN Can

Do to Influence Your Unit Staffing: Complete and Submit Assignment Despite Objection Forms (ADO's)

What are ADO forms?

These forms have been developed by the WSNA Cabinet of Economic and General Welfare. This form is designed to assist nurses in their bargaining units to document unsafe staffing. The purpose of the ADO form is to provide a tool for RNs to use, if they must accept an assignment they feel is unsafe. It allows the nurse to voice staffing concerns right from the beginning. By following the process of submitting an ADO, the nurse can officially alert management and hospital administration about patient safety and nurse workplace and staffing concerns. Documentation of staffing concerns on the ADO form may protect you one day if ever an untoward outcome should occur. The WSNA ADO forms are retrievable and may help you.

Why take the time to complete an ADO form?

At every Conference Committee meeting your WSNA elected leadership will bring forward the new ADOs, as well as concerns you have voiced to the officers or unit reps. Your documentation of these concerns helps to generate a needed paper trail. Your local unit officers use the ADO forms as a tool to hold management and administration accountable. If trends are seen on any unit(s) or shift(s), with manager(s) or equipment, the data helps to set things in motion to get changes made.

The hospital Safe Staffing Committee will be receiving reports about submitted ADOs. Collecting the information and documenting staffing concerns throughout the hospital will assist the new committee in developing and implementing appropriate Safe Staffing Plans. Your leadership team would appreciate your taking the time to complete the documentation so there can be some solutions made.

Get Involved! Stay informed! Help Push for Solution!

You can obtain the WSNA ADO forms from a Local Unit Officer. Remember, you are advised to

report the situation to the Nurse Manager or Department Manager prior to filling out the form. It is possible the issue could be remedied immediately if the right person knows about it!

Announcing the WSNA Safe Staffing Survey

Washington State recently passed the Safe Nurse Staffing law. By September 2008, each hospital must establish a nurse staffing committee composed of at least one-half direct care nurses. This committee will develop, oversee, and evaluate a nurse staffing plan for each unit and shift of the hospital based on patient care needs, appropriate skill mix of registered nurses and other nursing personnel, layout of the unit, and national standards/recommendations on nurse staffing.

While the Safe Nurse Staffing law will help improve patient outcomes, WSNA wants to also assess the law's impact on nurse safety, health, and well-being. To do this, we ask that you complete a short online survey that will provide some baseline information as nurse staffing committees are being established and are early in the process of carrying out their duties.

In approximately 6 months, we plan to ask you to complete a follow-up survey to see the difference these nurse staffing committees are making in terms of nurses' lives.

**ONLINE SURVEY ON NURSE STAFFING
LAW'S IMPACT ON NURSE SAFETY,
HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING:**

**To take the survey,
log on to wsna.org/surveys/staffing**



A Note From Your WSNA Staff Team

Thank you for all the support Christine (WSNA Nurse Representative) and I felt as we worked through the negotiations and related activities. It was remarkable to watch your passion, courage, and energy grow throughout the entire facility! We believe the email contact list worked out well. We will continue to use it to keep you connected to us throughout the year, as well as helping us begin our preparation for our next negotiation session. If you have not been receiving emails from us, send your home email address and we will add you to the list. jbussert@wsna.org If you think we already have your personal email address, but you have not received an email from us in the last couple of weeks, then please re-send it.

IT'S A PARTNERSHIP

We are growing stronger together!
WSNA Local Unit RNs: Your responsibility is to communicate the issues. You need to be listening and talking about the things that compromise your hours, wages and working conditions. Especially important are the things that are put you and your patients at risk. Be sure to check out the information on the web site (wsna.org) that relates to fatigue and fatigue's relationship to patient outcomes. Take your breaks and document when it doesn't happen.

WSNA Staff: Has the responsibility to provide the support that is needed to implement, interpret and monitor the contract. We carry the legal liability as your collective bargaining agent.

NEXT STEPS

Local Unit Officer Elections: You are being asked to consider to put your name forward to seek election to an officer position. It is very enlightening work. Ask anyone who has done it.

Unit Rep Appointments: We will be officially appointing and re-appointing nurses to be the WSNA contact person on your unit. This is a relatively painless position. It will require very little of your time. If you want to be considered for an appointment or if you want to be re-appointed, please let us know.

Planning for next Negotiations: Our goal is to achieve an overwhelming majority of membership

in WSNA. We think you all know about the power of numbers. It was very visible at the candlelight vigil and on the informational picket line. There are changes you are still looking for and we can work together to achieve them.

Jan Bussert, RN, WSNA Organizer

Let us go out and multiply!

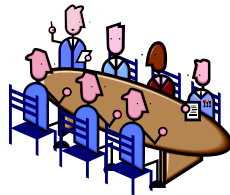
University of Washington Medical Center

RNs Helping RNs Call for Officers

**It is time for *New* WSNA Officers
If you are interested in influencing decisions
regarding wages, benefits & hours...
This is your opportunity to get involved. Your
local bargaining unit needs you!**

Local Unit Officer Positions to be filled:

- ✓ **Chairperson and Vice-Chair**
- ✓ **Secretary**
- ✓ **Treasurer**
- ✓ **Grievance Officer**
- ✓ **Membership Officer**



Duties of Officers:

- The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the unit and be an ex officio member,

with vote, of all committees, except the Nominating Committee.

- The vice-chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson, and shall perform other duties as may be assigned.
- The positions of secretary and treasurer may be combined and held by one person.
- The grievance officer shall be the liaison between the unit and WSNA to advise and assist WSNA in the Association's dealings with the Employer concerning grievances.
- The membership officer shall be liaison between WSNA and new members.
- Standing and special committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.

Elections will be conducted by mail in ballot to the WSNA offices shortly after all nominees are in.

If interested email:

**Anita Stull, RN, anitastull@comcast.net
WSNA Secretary**

Preserving Your Education Funds

During our recent successful contract negotiations with UW Medical Center management, we learned that the permanent Endowment to support Nursing Retention will reimburse nurses for some expenses related to Certification. If you sit for a Certification Exam, or pay for Re-Certification, it is possible to have \$250.00 of that expense reimbursed from the endowment. This will preserve your Education Funds for actual educational activities! Contact Patient Care Services or Dr. Lorie Wild for information and application forms to have your Certification expenses reimbursed.

