



Critical Facts to Ensure a Successful Staffing Committee

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The establishment of nurse staffing committees at each hospital is an excellent way for the nursing profession to articulate the difference that RNs make in the delivery of safe, effective and appropriate patient care. It is an opportunity for nursing professionals and hospital administration to collaboratively determine staffing needs and study the relationship between staffing and patient outcomes in their own institutions.

Keeping in mind these important facts:

- The purpose of the nurse staffing committees is to develop a nurse staffing plan for each unit and shift based a variety of factors including patient census and intensity, skill mix and experience of providers, and layout of unit.
- The role of the staff nurses on the committees is to advocate for sufficient nurse staffing for each unit and shift based on patient care needs.
- The staffing plan should be driven by patient care needs and not the hospital budget guidelines.
- It is **NOT** the job of the staff nurses to solve the hospital's latest budget crisis.
- As a member of the nurse staffing committee, you are representing WSNA. The recognition clause of the contract recognizes WSNA as the certified bargaining agent for the Local Unit. So staff nurses on the staffing committee must be WSNA members and selected by WSNA local unit.

Beware, Beware, Beware!

- The staffing committee is **NOT** the negotiation team.
- Mandatory subjects of bargaining **MUST NOT** become part of the discussions of the staffing committee.
- WAGES, HOURS, and WORKING CONDITIONS are mandatory subjects of bargaining. Examples include: length of shifts, rest between shifts, call back and standby provisions, on call shifts, scheduling of vacations, premium pay, low census and bonus pay.
- It is **NOT** appropriate for staffing committees to open the contract, agree to any MOUs or LOUs, or reach any agreements concerning wages, hours and working conditions.
- When in doubt, just say **NO**.