

March 2016

The Conductor

President's Message



Calling All Reps & Members Wanting to Become Reps

Hi HPAE Local 5185 Members,

One of our goals as a local for 2016 is to increase the number of Reps in our leadership structure. We encourage members to step forward and tell us you are interested in becoming a local rep. Our current rep structure needs strong activists and leaders to help our LEB enforce the contract."

So far, we have recruited three new reps this past quarter; and our goal is to have 40 strong reps by this time next year. We are a large local, 850 plus members, and the local officers need assistance conveying information to the membership, as well as making sure that the concerns of the members are brought back to us.

All members who want to be a Rep will receive the appropriate training, consisting of a training class, as well as mentoring by one of the Local Officers. Please contact one of us for more information. Joan Zitzman and Michele Viette, our Co-Grievance chairs, run a bi-monthly Rep meeting at the union office on Broadway.

Several members have said, "Yes", when we approached them and asked if they were interested in becoming a rep. So think about it, we need Reps in ALL Bargaining Units, ALL Departments, and ALL Shifts. We need to stand united. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to be well informed and well versed in the language of our contract. I hope to hear from many of you soon.

I Remain in Solidarity,

John J Bauer, RN
President Local 5185



Responding to Rumors

In light of the recent events that have occurred with the notification by management of hospital layoffs and the reduction of hours in the cafeteria, there have been many rumors. A lot of these rumors are just that, untrue fabrications. Nonetheless the rumors that have circulated throughout the Medical Center have caused members to be apprehensive, causing much doubt and uneasiness of who will be next!

So please, if you should hear any rumors or something that does not sound kosher, please reach out to one of your union leaders so the hearsay can be investigated and put to rest. Remember no question is a stupid one and we want you to bring your concerns to us. The members make up the union and you do have a say!

Going forward, we have all been down this road before and we have come through it as well. So keep your eyes and ears open and try and stay positive. Try not to react to the nonsense because it will get you nowhere.

Patricia Meys
HPAE Local 5185
Member Mobilizer

Know Your Rights: Leaves of Absence

Very often, the local officers and Reps are called on to represent members for time and attendance issues. After speaking with the members, we find that sometimes there are situations in their personal lives that have caused them to call in sick or to be late on a frequent basis.

If you have a personal, family situation - e.g. taking care of sick family members or anything else like that - make sure that fill out the appropriate paperwork for FMLA or another leave, and submit it to Human Resources. This may help to reduce your stress, avoid all the "write ups", and save your job.

Please refer to your union contract or go on line at www.hpae.org (then click on the link for Local 5185 and our contract) to get more information on the types of leave in our contract. **You can find the information under Article 6 (leave of absence), on pages 19 thru 24.** This article contains all the types of leave available to you. You can also go to Human Resources and ask them. All your information is confidential.

Don't jeopardize your job be proactive.

And just a reminder about a separate, but important issue: If you are short staffed in your department, you can find short staffing forms online at www.hpae.org

Susan Sienkiewicz
Treasurer

What is considered an unscheduled and a scheduled occurrence?

1. When you call out sick.
2. When you ask for the day off after the schedule is posted, even if the manager says ok. It can still be counted as an unscheduled occurrence. An unscheduled occurrence can be used against you in time and attendance.
3. What is considered a scheduled occurrence is when the day is requested off two weeks before the schedule is due to be posted. The PTO/TOB would then be approved and not considered unscheduled.
4. When an employee asked for the day off after the schedule is posted but finds their own coverage, the person covering should not acquire any overtime in doing so. This is not considered unscheduled.
5. The employee being down staffed by the manger. When the employee gets down staffed by the manager they have the option of taking PTO/TOB time without pay. This is not considered **unscheduled**.

HPAE. Putting care first.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



10 Ways to Protect Privatization Mistakes at Bergen Regional Medical Center

Over and over, privatization schemes in New Jersey have failed consumers, workers, and taxpayers alike, often raising costs and diminishing services for the public. It is particularly concerning when the costs can be in the lives of our most vulnerable, elderly

and residents with mental illnesses. The lease of Bergen Pines, NJ's largest hospital, to a private company nineteen years ago was a particularly egregious example of a lopsided contract that gave millions in profits to a private company with little accountability to the taxpayer.

The contract between the Bergen County Improvement Authority (BCIA), and Solomon Health Group to operate Bergen Regional Medical Center (BRMC) is coming to a close in a year. Bergen County Executive Tedesco has established a task force to review the history and develop recommendations for the future of the hospital. We have a chance to do it right this time, and cannot repeat the mistakes of the past.

Health professionals and community advocates opposed the privatization back in 1997, raising numerous objections to the sweetheart contract. Some of our worst projections came true at a hospital critical to providing mental health, long-term care, and addiction services for all of New Jersey.

While the privatization plan left the Bergen County Improvement Authority (BCIA) with the operating license for the hospital, the private operator had the controls, with little accountability. Secret loans, a lack of financial transparency, insider-dealing, staff and service cuts, lawsuits, compromised patient care, and labor disputes all plagued the earlier days of the privatization contract.

The County and hospital managers have been embroiled in years-long lawsuits over investments to improve the aging buildings and infrastructure, over cuts in services, loans and financial transparency. No one has yet to really add up the real cost of the contract, in lawsuits or millions in affiliate fees and owner profits.

While Solomon paid for maintenance, the County paid for capital improvements: it seemed that everything became a capital improvement. While the BCIA was technically responsible for upholding patient safety laws and regulations, they often were not even informed of violations. When services were cut, the BCIA was essentially powerless to force a reinstatement of services. A bottom-line standard for nurse staffing levels was too often skirted by the hospital, with no consequences.

Over the years, County administrations have come and gone, but the failures of the original contract made accountability and oversight nearly impossible. Whoever the hospital partner is in the future, the contract has to maintain County

authority and responsibility for access to quality care and essential mental health services, and ensure a safe and secure work environment for dedicated nurses, social workers and staff.

HPAE, with 500 nurses and health professionals at BRMC, has witnessed and challenged both Solomon Health Group and the County administration when privatization and cost-cutting threatened the health and safety of patients and workers. That's why we've drafted a set of standards that we are asking the County Task Force, the County Executive, and our local elected officials to make sure is part of any agreement with outside companies or partners.

- **Improved Oversight & Authority:** The BCIA must retain the license to operate the hospital and the authority to ensure full compliance with patient safety, financial reporting, governance and labor laws and regulations.
- **Protection of the Hospital's Mission for Patients:** Preference should be given to not-for-profit partnerships that focus on the mission of the hospital.
- **Effective Enforcement:** Strengthen remedies for contract violations, such as financial penalties and appointment of on-site monitor.
- **Safe Staffing Requirement.** Set safe standards for nurse and caregiver staffing for all hospital units.
- **Service Protections and Enhancements.** Determine services based on community need and protect and expand services, with BCIA approval for any change or reduction in health services. .
- **Workers' Rights Protections.** Recognize existing unions, collective bargaining agreements, and rights of the workforce.
- **A Proven Track Record Review** every applicant's track record for patient/resident safety, employee safety, labor relations and financial transparency.
- **Investment in A Safe Facility for Patients and Workers:** Make needed capital improvements, with shared financial responsibility for maintenance and improvements.
- **Accountability to Taxpayers & Financial Transparency.** Require annual audited financial statements for BRMC and any affiliates with business or financial relationship, and provide financial information to the public through the NJ Open Public Records Act.
- **Public disclosure of Self-dealing and a ban on conflicts of interest.** Require disclosure and prior review and approval by the County of all transactions between a partner or manager and any of its related or affiliated entities.

For the first time in years, nurses, health professionals, and patient advocates have reason to be encouraged by the actions of our County Executive. Bergen County Executive Tedesco's had made a commitment to protect our hospital and its patients, to enhance services and provide accountability. The future of Bergen Regional Medical Center and the fragile population we serve are depending on us to do it right this time.



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SAVE THE DATES

AFT NHP Healthcare Leaders & NHP Professional Issues Conference

April 20, 2016 - April 23, 2016

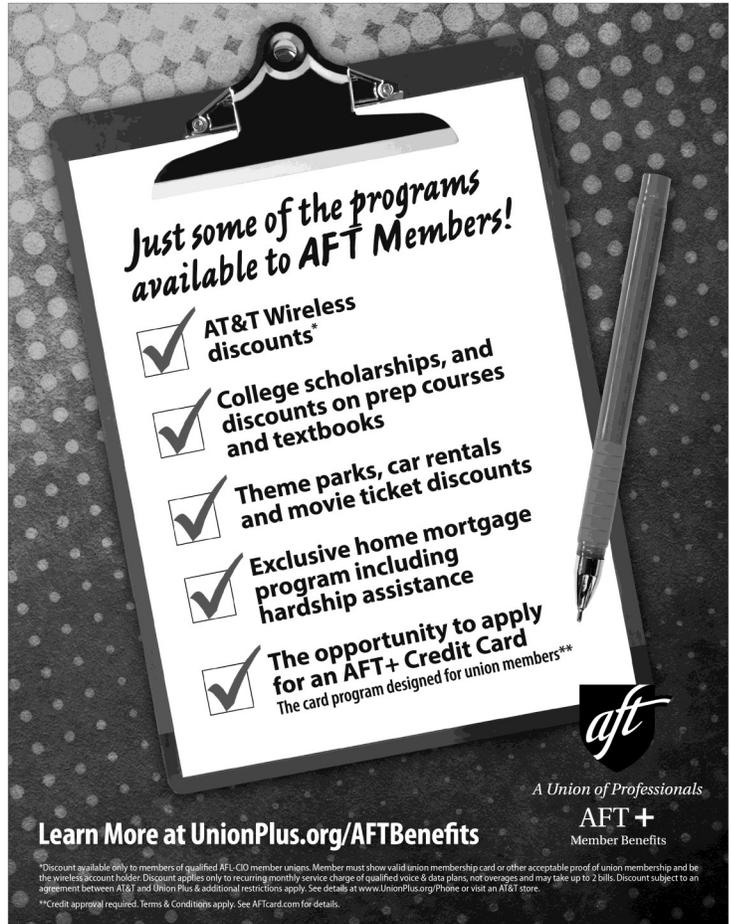
Hyatt Regency Washington
Washington District Of Columbia

Lobby Day is April 20,
PIC is April 21-22
Leaders Conference is April 23

For more information go to www.hpae.org

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October 6, - 7 2016



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