



## President's Message



The New Year is here. The challenges we face are not new, our work is difficult, and we are again preparing for negotiations. We will get through this together.

Since we are still in a State of Emergency in NJ due to COVID-19, how we proceed with preparing for negotiations is under way. For now, the plan is to have Virtual General Membership meetings. In person meetings are a challenge because we are limited to ten people in a room at a time. We have scheduled Zoom calls, so everyone can participate.

Keep an eye out for an email from HPAE with the details on how to join the call.

We successfully negotiated the Pandemic Incentive in hope that our nurses would pick up the time which would help with staffing. In addition to the incentive, the hospital decided to add the RN4's to their Surge Plan, to enhance their Team Nursing plan. I know not everyone is happy with the hospitals' decision to do this, however, we need to work together to get through this critical time. Let us welcome and work with the nurses who come to our units to help us. They are there to provide some assistance to us and no matter how big or how small the help is that each of them can do, we need it.

Check your emails regularly for Updates regarding the Zoom calls and Negotiations.

In solidarity,

**Doris Bell, RN, President**  
HPAE Local 5118

## 2021 Contract Campaign Information

Our 2021 contract negotiations will be like no other we have been through since organizing the union in 2000. Working through COVID-19 effects negotiations, our membership is different, and the Hospital Administration is different.

Our negotiating committee has committed to take time away from their families, work their 36 hours a week and work as many additional hours as it takes to win the best contract possible for all of us. We have 1,500 plus union members in our local. Without our support, involvement and show of solidarity we will not accomplish what we deserve and want in a new contract.

### Negotiation Dates

Sessions begin at 10:00 am. Due to the NJ COVID-19 restrictions, we do NOT know how we will be negotiating our new contract. It may be done virtually instead of in person. We will update you as we get closer to our first bargaining session. April 2, 8, 22, 29, May 6, 18, 20, 25, 26, 27 28 & 31.

### Dates to Remember

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>February 18</b>  | Membership ZOOM CALL<br>Discuss upcoming negotiations                       |
| <b>March 18</b>     | Membership ZOOM CALL<br>Review proposals                                    |
| <b>April 24</b>     | Membership ZOOM CALL<br>Negotiation's UPDATE                                |
| <b>May 11</b>       | Membership ZOOM CALL.<br>"VOTE" - Authorization<br>to Negotiating Committee |
| <b>May/June TBD</b> | Membership meetings<br>VOTE to ratify new contract or to strike             |
| <b>May 31</b>       | Union Contract Expires at Midenight   |

### Additional Activities

The Negotiating Committee will be asking us to show our support during negotiations by:

- Wearing a Union button and/or sticker on specific days
- Sign a Negotiating Committee Support Petition which will be presented by nurses to the hospital at a bargaining session
- Show solidarity by participating in Local bargaining activities!

## Grievance Corner

### Know your Rights

As a Union member we are entitled to have a Union Rep with us when we are called into a manager's office for an "investigatory meeting." An investigatory meeting occurs when there is suspicion that we did something wrong or we are a witness to an alleged incident involving another nurse.

### We are protected under the Weingarten

**Rights.** When you are asked by your manager to have a talk about a situation, the first question you should ask is, "will this meeting lead to disciplinary action?" If the answer is anything other than, "no", you have the right to stop the meeting and ask to have a Union Rep. The manager must stop the meeting to allow you time to find a Rep. If no Rep is available, the meeting must be rescheduled.

### Grievance Timeline

When you think our union contract was violated, you should immediately contact one of our Union Reps to discuss the issue. We only have 10 days to file a grievance. If the grievance is not filed within the 10 days, the employer may refuse to meet and discuss the grievance.

### Recent Grievances

Operating Room. We have filed three grievances for the OR nurses. One is a Class Action grievance.

- The hospital is using the call teams to staff the OR. This is a violation of our Union contract.
- The nurses are made to stay up to 1 to 2 hours past their scheduled shift because the hospital has no one to relieve them.

The hospital admits that the contract has been violated and has committed to making every attempt to relieve the nurses at the end of their scheduled shift.

In addition to filing the grievances, we had a zoom call with the nurses and met with the CNO to further discuss the ongoing staffing problems in the OR. There is a follow up meeting with the CNO this month. We are scheduling additional follow up calls with the nurses.

## Local Updates

**Pandemic Incentive.** The Incentive will be offered through February 13, 2021. Thereafter, it may be offered on a pay period basis at the discretion of the CNO. We agreed to this option to optimize staffing, when needed.

**Cooper's Surge Plan.** When the State of Emergency was declared and Cooper declared an emergency at the hospital, they implemented their surge plan. When this goes into effect, our contractual language under Article 11 Floating ... "in a bona fide emergency situation" ... may be affected, in that we may be floated outside of our float district if there is a staffing need to do so. In part and to minimize floating outside of our float districts, agency nurses have been contracted, volunteers are sought and the creation of the RN2, RN3, and RN4's was implemented (Team Nursing). We know there are pros and cons to the Team Nursing concept. This is temporary. When COVID-19 at the hospital levels off and the census stabilizes, Article 11 (floating outside of our float areas) can no longer be used by the hospital.

**RN4's.** The use of RN4's is new to the hospital's revised Surge Plan. We have addressed the concerns brought forth by a small number of nurses that 1) they would prefer taking LCPTO 2) in some cases they were not needed on the units they were assigned to and, 3) when the nurses arrived on the unit, there is a lack of being welcomed, communication and direction.

Last week we took a formal position with the hospital that included giving nurses the "option" to be floated or to take LCPTO. The hospital's response is due this week.

### 2021 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.

As we prepare for our Contract Negotiations, it is very important that we have your correct contact information.

Due to the Pandemic, we may be forced to do everything virtually. This will include the actual Negotiations, Membership Meetings (Calls) and the VOTE at the conclusion of bargaining.

Please go to [www.hpae.org](http://www.hpae.org), click on Member Resources. A drop box will open, click Update My Information and complete the form. You can also give your information to any Union Rep or Executive Board Officer.