



# HPAE

A Newsletter for the members of  
HPAE Local 5118 at Cooper Hospital

THE COMMUNICATOR

March 2019

## Message from the President



I have not been able to say this for the past five years. I'm filled with optimism. Over the past several months we have worked on four significant initiatives with Nursing Administration that will benefit those who take call, those who work in the medical surgical areas and all of the rest of us who are willing to pick up additional shifts during the summer. When the agreements are signed off on, we will make sure you have all of the information.

In December we started having divisional unit meetings. I want to thank you for coming out, completing the staffing survey, sharing your ideas and concerns and telling us what you want addressed when we begin contract negotiations in early 2020.

After several of the meetings we reached out to Nursing Administration and Human Resources to address the concerns that needed immediate attention. The CCU nurses told us there are leaks in their unit and the sliding doors going into the patients' rooms are not safe. Within twenty four hours maintenance was in the unit to address both issues. The leaks have been occurring for at least a year. When we all stand together, we can make changes!

In 2001 we negotiated our first Union contract with the hospital. The nurses voted in HPAE to be our Union. WHY, because the working environment was unsettling, administration took away up to four weeks of PTO from us and there were no raises for five years. It was a hard fought battle but we prevailed. Over the years there have been many battles and many victories.

**The victories happen when we stand together.**

The unit meetings we have been having is the first step in our 2020 Contract Campaign – negotiations. Throughout this year, going into 2020 we are going to be asking you to attend meetings, come to negotiations and other planned actions. If we want improvements in our working conditions, better wages, minimize increases to our medical benefits, etc., we have to show administration that we are united and stand together as a UNION.

Looking forward to working with all of you.

In solidarity -  
Doris Bell, RN  
President, Local 5118

# Become More Familiar with Our Union Contract

## Article 18.2 SELL BACK

After the last full pay period ending in May and November, we may elect to sell back PTO hours.

Full time RN's up to 40 hours of PTO in 8, 10, 12 hour increments provided we maintain 72 hours in our bank.

Part time/Limited time RN's up to 24 hours of PTO in 8, 10 or 12 hour increments provided we maintain 36 hours in our bank.

Employees with 15 years or more of service who accrue more than their maximum allowable amount of PTO time by December 15 may elect to sell back up to 40 hours of additional PTO at our base rate of pay.

## Article 22.3 PENSION PLAN

**NON UNION employees.** Annually, Cooper contributes 1% of their base salary into the Coopers' Retirement Plan. **This is a total of 1%.**

**UNION nurses.** Annually, we receive 3 additional contributions of 2% to the Plan in December. **This is a total of 3% a year.**

## Article 23 WAGES

Union nurses on the wage step scale receive a 1% increase for our recognized experience during the month in which our experience date occurs. This does not include Pool and Baylor.

All Union nurses receive the annual raise in June. Next raise is 2% effective June 2019.

## CONTRACT LANGUAGE

### Article 15.2 Application of Seniority

**Bargaining unit** seniority (the length of time that you have been a union member without any interruption)

This determines:

1. Bumping- taking someone's position if your position is eliminated.
2. Layoff/reduced hours- this is done by reverse order of bargaining unit seniority.
3. Recall- employees are brought back by order of bargaining unit seniority
4. Transfers- If 2 nurses want the same position and are both equally qualified, the one with the most bargaining unit seniority gets the position.
5. Promotions
6. Benefits
7. Job posting- the nurse with the most bargaining unit seniority and qualifications will be awarded the position
8. Vacation Scheduling- The choosing of vacations starts with the nurse with the most bargaining seniority and moves down **Unit, department. Site or office seniority** (the length of time that you have been on a unit/ or outpatient site)

This determines:

1. Holiday scheduling- if additional time off can be given this is done by unit seniority.
2. Personal PTO time- if 2 nurses request the same day off the most senior on that unit is awarded the PTO.
3. Unauthorized leaves

We hopes this helps you better understand this article.

Doris Bell

## Getting to Know Our Union Contract

### Call Outs Article 13 in our Contract.

- ✦ We must notify Cooper 3 hours prior to the start of our shift when we want to use PTU when calling out.
- ✦ In regard to disciplinary and absence patterns, call outs are considered on a 12 month rolling/floating calendar.
- ✦ For overtime shifts or additional time, we can cancel ourselves at least 24 hours in advance Monday 7a through Friday 7a and 48 hours in advance from Friday 7p through Sunday 7p.
- ✦ Any late cancellations will result in an unpaid PTU for the purposes of discipline.
- ✦ If we are cancelled by the Hospital, we must be given 1 ½ hours' notice.
- ✦ If nurses are given less than a one and a half hour notice they will receive two (2) hours of pay.
- ✦ However, anytime two attempts to reach us for cancellation has been made but we were not reachable, we will not receive the two hours of pay.
- ✦ Cooper University Health Care, has the discretion of canceling a nurse for only four hours of their shift instead of the full shift. In this case, the nurse is to report to work four hours later than the original start of shift time

\*\*\* Sick leaves and call-outs MAY Not be used to extend or replace our vacation days or holidays, nor to extend weekends off.

## OSHA - Workplace Violence Fact Sheet

Workplace violence is violence or the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of homicide deaths.

### Who is Vulnerable?

Some 2 million American workers are victims of workplace violence each year. Workplace violence can strike anywhere, and no one is immune. Some workers, however, are at increased risk. This group includes healthcare workers, at the forefront are nurses.

### How Employees can protect themselves

Learn how to recognize, avoid, or diffuse potentially violent situations by attending personal safety training programs. Alert supervisors to any concerns about safety or security and immediately report all incidents. Always be aware of your surroundings.

### Employer Responsibility

The best protection employers can offer is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence against or by their employees. The employer should establish a workplace violence prevention program or incorporate the information into an existing accident prevention program, employee handbook, on portals, etc. Have a clear policy and that all employees know the policy and understand that all claims of workplace violence will be investigated and remedied promptly. Providing safety education for all employees is critical.



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**Address Service Requested**

## GRIEVANCE CORNER

Since the beginning of this year, we have filed three grievances. We also resolved several other issues that you raised by talking them through with nursing administration and human resources.

1. NICU nurses mandated to do pediatric transports. We filed a Class Action grievance which the nurses in the NICU signed on to. Four of the nurses also attended the grievance meeting. We won this grievance. The NICU nurses will not do pediatric transports.
2. Clocking in late. We filed this grievance because in the ICU if you are going to be late and find someone to cover for you, it was OK to do. A nurse did what the “practice” in the unit has been but did not know that the manager had to be notified because the nurses weren’t told they had to do this. The grievance was denied by the hospital, without management approval, we will be considered late.
3. HIPPA violation. A nurse tried to help a co-worker by looking up their protected health information. The grievance was denied by the hospital. We cannot look up information for another employee without the appropriate paper work being processed.

### Disciplines

1. Lab specimens. Written warnings are given when labels are not on specimen and/or the wrong slip was provided.
2. Unprofessional behavior. Verbal and/or written warnings are given when there are family or patient complaints and when nurses are overheard arguing with each other by a family member, a patient or management.

Jackie Franchetti, RN  
Grievance Chair