



The Communicator

HPAE Local 5118 News

March 2016

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the winter finally is moving out and spring is moving in, I am reminded of the upcoming preparation that we have ahead of us in gearing up for negotiations in the fall of this year. Cooper Hospital has seen a surge in its census, as well as a huge influx of new nurses to help care for those patients. Those of us who have been here a while need to remind those new members about our reasons for voting to have HPAE union representation at Cooper. The most important reason was to have a say in our working conditions and patient safety.

There are still many issues throughout the hospital that the Executive Board continues to work on daily, but I am proud to see more nurses on units stand up and speak with administration as a group about what they need. We have seen changes on the units as a result of these meetings. There are, however, still some that say they are afraid of retaliation. It is important to continue to respectfully say what is important both for the protection of your license and patient safety.

As always, I want to remind everyone about our ongoing campaign for our staffing bill. On May 16th we will again be going to Trenton to speak to our elected officials so they can understand the importance the staffing bill has for us, as front-line care providers. I encourage as many nurses as possible to be on that bus to Trenton.

Our local as well as other locals in the state will be coming together in Trenton to fight that fight. It's pretty powerful to see all the HPAE locals working together, and by being part of this it will give you a better perspective of the state work that HPAE is doing. Please see any executive board member to let us know you are able to come to this event.

In Solidarity,
Doris Bell
Local 5118 President

SAVE THE DATES

AFT NHP Healthcare Leaders & NHP Professional Issues Conference

Hyatt Regency Washington, DC
April 20, 2016 - April 23, 2016

Lobby Day—4/20, PIC —4/21-22
Leaders Conference 4/23

For more information go to www.hpae.org

HPAE Lobby Day: May 16, 2016 - Trenton



Join HPAE members from all over the state on May 16 as we go to our state capitol for our annual Lobby Day. Our agenda this year is

- Safe Staffing Bill: legal requirements for nurse to patient ratios
- \$15 per hour minimum wage: From Seattle to New York, unions are winning a living wage. Now its New Jersey's turn!

*Transportation will be provided. Please RSVP to tleone@hpae.org or call 856-663-0300 ext 317

HPAE Convention
October 6 - 7, 2016

Five Important Updates for Members

1. VOLUNTARY FLOAT FORMS:

You may volunteer to float outside your district. If you do, it is important to fill out the Voluntary Float Form. We have created this form to protect you. The hospital has agreed to place copies at all the nurses' stations, and in the nursing office. If you do not complete the form, that unit may become a permanent part of your float district. Please contact a Union Officer, or Rep if there is a problem.

2. PARKING:

PLEASE park in your assigned area. There have been many written warnings for parking below the 4th floor in the arcade, and for not parking in the assigned lot. A second discipline can result in losing your parking privileges.

3. EMAIL ADDRESSES:

We are in the process of updating all members' email addresses. If you are not receiving any updates/emails from your Local Officers, please send an officer your latest email address (your Cooper email address) or drop it in one of the Union mailboxes. Negotiations will be around the corner, and we want to keep everyone updated!

4. SCANNING:

Don't forget to scan all your meds. There has been an increase in verbal warnings for nurses that are not scanning meds into Epic. If a patient refuses a med, be sure to document that MD notified. If there is a problem with the WOW's or scanner itself, tell your Manager ASAP.

5. LAB SPECIMENS:

There have been a few disciplines for not labeling a lab specimen or incorrect labeling of lab specimens. Please take a second and check all your labels and slips.

Our Fight for Safe Staffing

Since becoming the VP of our local union, HPAE Local 5118, I have had the opportunity to speak with many of our union members on various floors of the hospital as well as outpatient areas. Although situations are very different, each area has had the same concern: SAFE STAFFING!!

I cannot stress enough to you that the Local Executive Board (LEB) is presenting your staffing concerns directly to senior leadership at every turn. Any opportunity we have to present the issue of safe staffing we are doing it. A few areas have seen improvement, such as on P6 and P8. An additional nurse is being brought in at 10 am to prevent them from being pulled at 7am; this nurse is able to take patients and admissions to help lessen the heavier assignments on the floor, as well as being able to support the other nurses.

Currently, a staffing pilot on K 9 has allowed our daily average census to be increased to 55 to support having an 11th nurse in order to start the shift at a 1:5 ratio.

I have had meetings in the outpatient areas. Voorhees Pediatrics is starting a new call process. We will continue to follow the changes made there and support the nurses' concerns in this area. In the Surgical Center in Voorhees, many issues and concerns were presented at recent meetings. They were addressed and the result is that most of concerns are resolving, resulting in a much improved work environment.

As chair of the staffing committee, I address the ADO forms you fill out. I would like to remind you when filling out these forms to please include your personal email. Many forms do not have this information provided. When I get the hospital's response to your ADO, I will forward it to you via email. You may feel nothing comes from them, but I assure you they are looked at and addressed with the hospital.

Lastly, I would like to say the dedication you all show to each other is wonderful. I have had nurses tell me the only reason they stay is because of their co-workers. I believe the nurses who work at Cooper are the best of the best; all of you are truly an amazing group of nurses. Together we can and WILL make Cooper the best place to work. We need to stand together and make them hear us. I encourage you to continue to reach out to us; we will do everything in our power to support you.

In Solidarity,
Carolyn Ali RN N/S9
VP HPAE Local 5118

HPAE. Putting care first.

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.

Ann Twomey
President HPAE



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 facebook.com/hpaeaft

Address Service Requested

VP/Grievance Chair Update

As many of you are aware, there were many nurses being given written warnings for parking violations. Some were parking below the 4th level, some were not parking in their assigned parking lot, and some were pulling tickets. HPAE had concerns that some of the newer nurses were unaware of the above and did not know they were parking against policy. HPAE is in discussions with CUH regarding parking issues.

Please remember to follow the parking policy. We did clarify with the hospital that there are exceptions the policy. If you come to the hospital as a patient or a visitor and do not use your badge to get into the parkade, then you need to pull a ticket and pay. This does not count if you are coming in for a class, work related business, etc.

Disciplines:

1. Documentation - Nurses have been disciplined for not providing documentation on the pain board and hourly checks. Please be careful and triple check your documentation.
2. HIPAA- Nurses were accessing family labs on the computer. This is against the HIPAA policy. CUH sent out a new policy several weeks ago that had a section for you to fill out a form / scan it in / etc that gives you some access once approved. Please review the policy before you check on labs on your family.

Grievances:

1. We WON a grievance for a nurse placed in charge while precepting. The hospital stated it would follow the contract, which prohibits precepting while in charge. Please question your assignment if this happens to you. Ask the question, work, and then contact a union rep to grieve it.
2. We are having a third step grievance for orientees being pulled off of orientation to take a full assignment. We know staffing is bad all through the hospital, but this is a violation of the contract and we have to look out for the new nurses. We need staff and we need to help them

succeed, so please contact a union rep to grieve each situation. Together, we can make a difference!

Schedules:

Remember once the base schedule is posted, it cannot be changed by management. Your manager can ask for volunteers, but not move you.

The hospital is able to balance the schedule before they post it. We have heard from staff in several units that they are having to do more weekends. This should be a temporary situation and not the norm. Many areas have open positions and are hiring part timers to help with the weekend rotation. Please make sure there is a rotational list available for you to see when your turn is coming up for a weekend. It is easier to schedule yourself for a Sunday or Saturday then being made to do it.

If this is not how it is being done on your unit please contact a rep

Submitted by,
Jackie Franchetti RN
Local 5118 VP/Grievance Chair



Just some of the AFT member programs!

- AT&T Wireless discounts*
- Exclusive home mortgage program including hardship assistance
- The opportunity to apply for an AFT+ Credit Card
The card program designed for union members**

UnionPlus.org/AFTBenefits

*Discount available only to members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions. Member must show valid union membership card or other acceptable proof of union membership and be the wireless account holder. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice & data plans, not overages and may take up to 2 bills. Discount subject to an agreement between AT&T and Union Plus & additional restrictions apply. See details at www.UnionPlus.org/Phone or visit an AT&T store.
**Credit approval required. Terms & Conditions apply. See AFTcard.com for details.