



# HPAE

## LOCAL 5118 Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF HPAE LOCAL 5118 AT COOPER HOSPITAL

THE COMMUNICATOR NEWSLETTER

November 2016

### Message from the President

Looking back at 2016, I can certainly say it's been a very long year with many changes. Our census has soared and yet we continue to deliver the best and safest care we can to the patients at Cooper Hospital. As usual, we continued to provide that quality care even with the many changes in how we staff our units, many new policies, and the many new managers who have come and gone. One thing I can say for sure is that the nurses of Local 5118 are still here and standing strong.

As we are approaching negotiations in 2017 we will be holding meetings and gathering information important in getting a good contract; and it is crucial for all of us to be part of this. So, if there is a meeting scheduled, please make sure you attend. Take the time to fill out the survey which will be sent to your house, and consider being part of the negotiation committee. If that commitment is too big, then sign up to attend a negotiation session, or make sure your email and cell phone number is

up to date.

Our local union has been involved in many things. We have been successful in changing the way the hospital cancels nurses if they have worked overtime, made sure that nurses were all treated the same when there were HIPPA disciplines, and made sure that Kronos maintained our contractual language for self-scheduling. We sat with nurses who felt a need to bring forth issues on their units, and we were there when new units opened to make sure nurses kept their seniority and were transferred the right way.

So, things do get done when we all work together. I encourage you all to be part of our journey in negotiations in 2017.

On behalf of the Local Executive Board I would like to wish you all **HAPPY HOLIDAYS.**

Doris Bell  
President, Local 5118

### Utilization Review Corner

On Monday October 31<sup>st</sup>, we were alerted by the UR nurses of an unsafe working condition in their area. There was construction being done in the department and they were noticing odors since the work started. A few of the employees were feeling sick and went to Occupational Health to be seen. They were experiencing numbness, headaches, elevated BP's, and nausea.

We immediately contacted Human Resources and informed them of the situation. The hospital reported there was a heat pump that was low on refrigerant and a coil froze, but did not relocate the group to another work area.

After our email to HR, the area was then isolated and a HEPA filtered exhaust was put in place and the area had a barrier erected. There were also concerns about bugs falling from the ceiling, so a screen was installed and an exterminator was called.

If you experience any unsafe working conditions in your work area please contact me ASAP.

### HPAE DUES INFORMATION

At the HPAE 2016 Convention, elected delegates voted to increase the HPAE dues to 1.25% of gross pay per pay period. Currently, HPAE Membership dues are 1.1% of your gross pay **per pay period.**

Our HPAE union dues also include the "per capita fees" or dues we pay to our national union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). HPAE is part of the health care division of AFT. Our national union provides us with valuable resources and benefits.

AFT dues are currently \$18.78 **per month** for a full-time member, but they have been going up every year, based on delegates voting every two years at the AFT National Convention. At the 2016 AFT Convention, delegates approved a dues increase to \$19.03 in 2017, and \$19.28 in 2018. All of these dues increases by AFT have to be paid out of our HPAE dues, which have not been changed since 2011, when the 1% HPAE dues and AFT fees were combined into the 1.1% HPAE dues.

As the AFT dues increased, this resulted in a decrease of the dues money which HPAE can use for arbitrations, negotiations, printing costs, etc. Simply put, AFT dues increased, while HPAE dues decreased to keep the combined amount to 1.1%. Yet, despite the reduction in funds to HPAE, we have continued to preserve our recognition, negotiated our first national master contract (at the American Red Cross), and campaigned for safe staffing and workplace safety.

HPAE cannot continue to operate at a deficit, as we have been the last couple of years. It would be detrimental to our members, and the contractual and professional standards we have all worked so hard and long to secure. Six years of operating with little to no surplus has made our union vulnerable in the event of inevitable struggles, including legal battles, organizing drives, contract campaigns, and strikes.

The additional cost of the dues increase per full-time member, with an annual salary of \$90,000-\$100,000, will be about \$5.50 per pay. As always, dues may be tax deductible, depending on your income and other business expenses.

Despite the challenges, we will continue to grow, fight and win.

## Union Updates

### Grievances:

1. We won a grievance supporting your union reps' ability to protect your Weingarten Rights. As a union member you have the right to have a union rep at an investigatory meeting. The union rep is permitted to ask clarifying questions and assist you during this process.
2. We have a grievance we filed against management for floating an orientee to another unit while on orientation. This violates our contract.
3. We have a grievance pending for the mandation of a nurse not by reverse order of bargaining unit seniority.

**Low Census:** For over 2 months Peds, PICU, NICU, L/D, MIU and MFCU have been mandating nurses almost every shift not to come to work. We are following this and making sure the correct process is being followed.

### Update on Mandation:

Currently the hospital can cancel the first 4 hours of your shift due to low census. The hospital will call you at 5am or 5pm and tell you to either come to work at 11a/11p or that you are being canceled or mandated for the whole shift off.

You should only get one call. It is for a 4 hour period, not 6 hours. Also, the hospital can mandate day shift by 3:00 pm ( meaning the census is low and unless no one wants LCPTO, then someone needs to go home) You will not be mandated after this time period.

The hospital has also agreed to call back the nurse who was mandated during the shift if the census goes back up. The nurse can volunteer to come back in or not.

**Is this a discipline?** If your manager asks to talk to you, please make sure that you ask if this is a discipline. A talk or coaching are NOT disciplines, but a counseling or verbal warning is.

We want you to feel safe talking to your manager, but also to have a union rep there if it is an investigation or discipline.. If you feel at anytime that the conversation may lead to discipline, you have the right to stop the meeting and ask for a rep.

**KRONOS:** We have asked the hospital to create a mechanism so that all staff can see whether someone is on extra time or overtime. This is important so everyone will know if you were cancelled correctly or coded correctly. We should have this information in the next month.

**HIPAA:** The number of nurses disciplined for HIPAA has decreased, but still continue. Please do not look at charts that are not under your direct care or have the potential to be admitted to your unit. The hospital will investigate each case.

Submitted by Jackie Franchetti, RN

## When You Leave Cooper....What Benefits Do You Have From the HPAE Retiree Medical Trust?

**All bargaining union employees at Cooper Hospital currently contribute \$.20 ( twenty cents) per hour into the HPAE Medical Trust. This trust can be used when you reach retirement age for medical spending. Below is an explanation on how the benefit works.**

There are two types of benefits in our plan.

For members who aren't in the plan very long (less than 5 years) and thus don't have a lot of money contributed, there is a "limited beneficiary" benefit. When the member is eligible to access the benefit, they can get reimbursements equal to the amount of money which they (and/or the employer) contributed. They will submit reimbursement claims to the Fund office until they have nothing left in their account. If someone has a couple of big bills, say \$2000 for a surgery co-insurance and \$1000 for dental work, that money will be useful, but the limitation of this type of benefit is that once the employee's account goes to \$0, they have no money left, even if they have used up the money in one year. They will have used up all of their reimbursement benefits.

For members who have 5 or more years in the plan, they are eligible as a "regular beneficiary" for a monthly reimbursement benefit for life which rolls over in any month the benefit is not used. While the monthly amount may be relatively small if you're retiring with 7 or 8 years in the plan, it's actually more financially lucrative than the lump sum benefit. Your monthly reimbursement amount is based, in part, on applying a 6% interest rate to all of the contributions that have been made, whether by an employee and/or an employer. As a result, a regular beneficiary gets back in just less than 7 years an amount of reimbursements equal to what has been contributed and then keeps on having a monthly reimbursement benefit for the rest of their life.

In that sense, the benefits for the regular beneficiary is more like a monthly pension, which typically can't be used to pay off big bills, but does provide the retiree with secure, added income. A regular beneficiary could use their reimbursement benefit, for example, to pay part of their monthly health insurance premium for a Medicare supplement plan or pay part of Medicare B monthly costs.

If you have a big bill, say \$500 for an eye glass exam and lenses, you will be fully reimbursed but over a period of time. In this case, you would submit your reimbursement claim for the \$500 bill, and the fund would pay you your monthly reimbursement amount each month (e.g. \$50 per month) for ten months until the total amount of the bill was covered.

Our goal is to achieve an employer matching contribution to this fund. We will continue to strive for this in our next contract.

Submitted by Mike Slott HPAE, Jackie Franchetti RN

## Message from the President



The results of the Presidential and Congressional elections present challenges to each of us as union members and as members of the communities where we live and work. Regardless of how you voted, I ask you to consider that the election results threaten our union and workplace rights, women's health, access to health care for tens of millions of Americans, and the constitutional rights of many of our neighbors, family members, friends and co-workers. While we work to restore civility to our political conversations, we also must work to protect and promote the workplace and civil rights that are the bedrock of our democracy and quality of life.

As a nurse and union leader, I've spent over 40 years fighting for the rights of healthcare workers to have a voice in their workplace. I know that many HPAE members have done the same, in your workplaces and through political activism. I now fear that there will be concerted efforts to strangle the voices of working people on the job.

For example, as President, Donald Trump will nominate one or more Supreme Court Justices and the Senate is likely to confirm these nominations, which most likely will be much more conservative, and inclined to strip public sector workers of their hard-won collective bargaining rights.

As President, Donald Trump will appoint members of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). While President Obama's appointments to the NLRB have upheld and even strengthened our rights in the face of employer violations of our organizing and collective bargaining rights, we can expect President Trump appointees to undermine and constrict these rights.

Under a Trump Administration, I believe we will face a much more difficult time protecting our workplace rights and the voices of nurses and health professionals when they speak up against corporate practices that threaten patient and worker safety and quality of care.

I've fought to raise wages, both in unionized hospitals and through raising the minimum wage, so that workers can raise their families with dignity and we can build the middle class in this country. Without unions and legal protections, too many employers will begin a race to the

bottom, destroying our progress and our middle class.

HPAE joined with countless citizen and labor groups and President Obama, to make great strides in expanding access to healthcare for uninsured Americans. Instead of improving Obamacare, Trump supports repeal of the law, which would cause millions of newly insured Americans, including many adult children still covered by parents' health plans, to lose their coverage.

We must challenge the 'normalizing' of hate speech and attacks on women, the disabled, immigrants and others. I've been hearing people ask: "How do we talk to our children, our students, about the results of this election?" It is not an exaggeration that many parents and teachers are facing frightened children today, some of whom are from families under direct attack during the campaign.

One answer is that we will fight to protect them, their dignity and their rights, whoever they are. We need to re-commit to the principles of our union, and build broad coalitions with groups fighting for a decent and just society.

Equally important are the voices of our members, who share the frustrations of many Americans with candidates and policies that don't speak to or for them. We need to listen to those voices, and work for new ways to bring those voices to our politics. It is critical for all of us to remember that our union is our best vehicle for raising these issues in a powerful way, bringing our principles of fairness and dignity for working families to the table.

At the same time, we need to work towards policies that actually address income inequality, rather than merely foster blame and division. We will join with our allies in the fight to protect workplace, civil and human rights for everyone. We will challenge our politicians, Democrats and Republicans, to fight to protect and strengthen the gains made in this country over the past 50 years.

As we fight to protect our hard-earned rights, we need to work to unify our union and our country. We won't stop.



A Newsletter for the members of HPAE  
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## A Message from our State Officers on the HPAE Convention

On October 6-7, 2016 HPAE delegates, members, and staff came together to launch an ambitious plan to take on corporate healthcare, deepen membership involvement, win strong contracts, grow our union and strengthen community alliances.

Make no mistake, we are in difficult times and we need to take on increasingly more powerful health systems if we are to protect our workplace rights, our voice in patient care and the standards of care and working conditions we have worked so hard to earn.

That's why we also supported changes to HPAE's constitution, to adapt to these changing conditions, allowing us to be more effective and at the same time, more careful with the resources we have. It's why we supported specific resolutions to expand our organizing and membership programs, to build our strength and capacity.

That's also why our State Executive Council proposed, and our convention delegates passed a resolution to increase our dues, so that we have the resources to protect and advance our programs.

The increase, from 1.1% to 1.25% will have minimal impact on members, and we wanted to make sure of that. It will mean only a few more dollars per pay period in dues. For example, a member making \$70,000 per year will only pay \$4 more in dues per pay period. The increase will be scheduled to take effect with the first paychecks of 2017. Still, we know that HPAE members are working hard to stay ahead financially, and no one will welcome paying more. But without this increase, HPAE's budget will continue to operate at a deficit, and we would not be able to keep pace with our members' needs and aspirations.

We urge you to review the campaigns and programs launched at our [2016 Convention](http://www.hpae.org/campaigns/convention2016/) at <http://www.hpae.org/campaigns/convention2016/> – and see how engaged we will be this year in fighting to protect the advances we've made for all healthcare workers over the years. We are fighting to protect members' insurance coverage – and we are out there fighting surprise medical bills and 'narrow networks' that limit our members' options and increase their costs.

We are challenging hospital mergers when they threaten our rights, or jobs. We are still fighting for safe staffing, in contracts and in the NJ legislature. If you have questions on our programs, on the constitutional changes or on the dues increase, feel free to reach out to any of us. We hope you will get engaged with these programs and fight alongside your colleagues for a healthcare system that works for all of us.

Sincerely  
President Ann Twomey  
First Vice President Bernie Gerard  
Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Rosen



# AMERICAN DREAM

★ SWEEPSTAKES ★

Unions are the cornerstone of the American dream. So for our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we want to celebrate union members by giving away more than \$100,000 in prizes.

**REGISTER 9/29/16 – 12/31/16 TO WIN:**

**\$500 gift cards** to 12 winners every week  
**\$30,000 Grand Prize** to 1 winner

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