



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

LET'S DO THIS ... The time is now to begin preparing for our negotiations in 2024. Getting ready takes a lot of planning, discussing, and testing to see where our strengths and weaknesses are.

Our first test was our Button Day. The overwhelming majority of the units buttoned up. It was great to see. I think we had some logistical problems with getting the buttons out in the other few areas. We track who is working the day of an event and who agreed to wear the button in order to determine where our strengths and weaknesses exist.

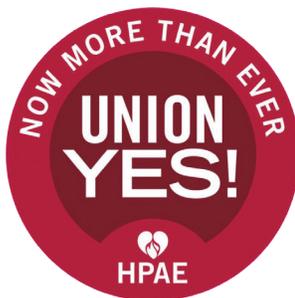
The second test will be April 12. It is extremely important that ALL of us participate. Our numbers for this action will send Cooper a message. **WE ARE UNITED AS ONE** or not many nurses will fight for the issues at hand. **More information to follow. BE THERE!**

Test number three. **SIGN UP NOW for our May 11th STAFFING RALLY in TRENTON. Register at www.hpae.org. Transportation and food will be provided. This is our opportunity to let the legislatures know from US – OUR VOICES – what the staffing really is at Cooper.** The cost is \$25 which holds your seat on the bus. The money will be refunded to your account when you board the bus.

In May 2023 when we are nearing the end of contract negotiations with Cooper, we will review our membership participation in 2022 and the beginning of 2023 to help determine the outcome of negotiations; Agree on a new contract or NOT.

WE CAN DO THIS ... STAND UNITED, STAND TOGETHER TO BE HEARD AND RESPECTED.

In Solidarity,
Doris Bell, President



BECOME A UNION REP

We have twenty active HPAE Union Reps for our Local Union here at Cooper. Our goal is to have a rep in the work areas where a Union RN works. The more reps we have, the quicker our issues, concerns and questions will be addressed.

Union Reps go through a comprehensive training on how to properly address problems we encounter at work. This includes when the hospital violates the language in our Union Contract and/or when they violate one of their own hospital policies. You will learn more about our rights as a Union member, Labor Laws, and will be given an overview of the Labor Movement. Understanding what a Union is, is essential to better understanding what and why we do what we do as Union leaders. Your role and responsibilities are clearly defined.

If you are interested in learning more about what Union Reps do, please contact Ann McCausland, Grievance Chair at annmcc@comcast.net.

VIRTUAL NURSING: THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

The nursing shortage has reached its all-time high. Nurses are leaving the bedsides in droves as a result of the pandemic in 2020, and 3 years later it's now a crisis.

I read an article that stated "the turnover rate for nurses increased by 8.4% in 2021 and currently stands at 27%.

This global issue is not only costing hospitals millions of dollars, but experienced bedside nurses are leaving which compromises the quality of care to our patients.

The million-dollar question is: How do you fix the nursing shortage? Hence the fast-growing trend in health care. Virtual Nursing. The Care model is here and seems like it's taking off to a good start. One hospital in Kansas City already instituted this care model and its functionality.

What is virtual nursing? It's a 24/7 monitoring system for inpatients similar to the Tele Med concept. The virtual nurse has the capability of responding to patients as well as setting up scheduled time with the patient. The scheduled time may be to provide education.

The workflow for virtual nurses is determined by the organization. There are not global stated responsibilities.

As with everything, there are Pros and Cons with Virtual Nursing.

Tina Jones, RN

WHERE IS OUR PROTECTION COOPER

Rise in Security Concerns

There is a rise in workplace violence. The lack of consistent Security is a huge problem. Whether it's workplace violence, uncontrolled visitors, or the dreaded parking garage fiasco, we must hold the administration at Cooper accountable.

As officers, we urge you to immediately notify us and write EARS reports. If an EARS report isn't written, it's our word versus the hospital. If a BRRT is called, a panic button is hit, or a family makes a threatening comment, write an EARS report.

We've all seen the new posters in the lobby, but that isn't effective. We are trying to prove to the hospital that we need more security officers and for the hospital to be held accountable when there is a delay when we call for help. Let any of our Union Reps or Officers know immediately as well as we can bring it to their attention faster.

We have established a Violence Committee with the hospital and urge any members interested to join this committee to voice your concerns with administration.

They need to hear our voices. Contact our President, Doris Bell at dbell-hpae@comcast.net if you are interested in becoming a member of this committee.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

As a nurse on the Violence Prevention Committee, I have been privy to some very important information that I feel ALL nurses should be a part of.

According to the statistics that the hospital tracks there are an average number of 18 "events" per month.

If there is no EARS report then it is NOT in the data base to trend.

The top 3 areas in the hospital w/ the most issues are the ED/ K10 and the Cooper EMS.

Here is the part that WE as a group MUST start doing EVERY time it happens. FILL out an EARS report for verbal abuse by visitors. As of right now the data shows ZERO?????

There is a new drop down for VIOLENCE on the EARS page.

We MUST take the time to fill out EVERY incident!!! Families/ Visitors or Patients verbal, physical abuse MUST be documented.

If we want to prove to administration that we need more support we MUST start documenting what is going on in our day to day AND night shifts.

Patricia Hoffman RN PICU

UNION STUFF

Nursing License

May is NJ License renewal month! If your NJ RN License is up for renewal this year, please allow yourself enough time to renew it. We cannot work with an expired/lapsed RN license.

If this happens, we will be put on administrative suspension until our new license is verified.

PTO Sell Back

May is an opportunity for us to receive payment for PTO.

Refer to Article 18.2 in our Union contract.

Tuition Reimbursement & Staff Development – Article 21 in our Union contract.

Nurses who have worked 1,000 hours or more the previous year has access to \$500 dollars for reimbursement per the calendar year. This includes costs of successful certification and/or recertification fees/exams, related books/materials, outside sponsored CPR, BLS, ACLS, NRP, etc. classes and/or continuing education conference fees relating to the enhancement of patient care delivery, the membership fee of a professional nursing organization, etc.

This \$500 is not part of the money allowance for tuition reimbursement. Please reach out to you educator or management for reimbursement.

Competency Requirements

Cooper is just starting to put out information for their annual RN competencies requirements. These competencies are part of our job requirements.

Please allow yourself enough time to complete and hand everything in by the stated deadline. Competencies and deadlines are unit specific. Reach out to your managers or educators if you have any questions. If we do not complete these requirements, we may not be permitted to work.

Staffing

Please continue to fill out our ADO (Assignment Despite Object) forms for assignments you feel are unsafe. Remember to attach a charge sheet with assignments to the ADO and place it in a union mailbox. Management has to answer any turned in ADO forms. Mailboxes are in the hallway to Dorrance and by exit by the cafeteria.

 **Staffing Rally May 11th in Trenton. HPAE and other Unions from across the State are having a rally in Trenton to support the Staffing Bill that HPAE assisted in composing.**

Meet with legislators. This is an opportunity to HAVE OUR VOICES HEARD.

Unit contact RN

If you're interested in becoming a union contact person for your unit, contact one of our Union Officers for more information. Help us get out information, update your co-workers, collect signatures for petitions, hand out Union buttons and more.

The more nurses involved with our Union, the STRONGER we are.

UNION CONCERTED ACTION IN APRIL. STAY TUNED.

GRIEVANCE CORNER

Recently several issues have been brought to our attention that need clarity. We want to make sure we all have the accurate information.

Can we be disciplined if we clock out early?

Yes, we can. Hospital Policy 8.618 addresses unauthorized late arrivals and early departures. A combination of six (6) or more unauthorized late arrivals/early departures is considered excessive and may result in disciplinary action. When we have another RN coming in early or staying late for us, a manager or supervisor must be notified, and the exception sheet must be filled out.

Please Note: Lateness is defined as one (1) minute or greater than the start of our shift.

Parking

All employees are required to park above the 4th floor in the hospital parking garage.

The 1st offense is an automatic **written warning**.

The 2nd offense will result in the **loss of parking privileges for the remainder of our employment**.

Can We be disciplined over the phone?

The short answer is **NO**. We are protected by the Weingarten Rights. **Weingarten Rights: Defined as the right of Union-represented employees to have a Union representative present during an interview that could lead to disciplinary action.**

If, however, we are contacted by management and an in-person meeting is not feasible; a three-way-call, web-ex or a phone on speaker meeting with us, a Union rep and management is permissible. Regardless if the meeting is in person or virtually, we should always complete the form that shows we requested Union representation. This form is provided by management.

Note: When we are asked to meet with management, we should always ask "Could this meeting lead to discipline?" **If the answer is yes, we have the right to stop the meeting and request to have a Union rep present before the meeting can start.**

Ann McCausland, Grievance Chair





Address Service Requested

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

110 Kinderkamack Road
Emerson, NJ 07630
Phone: 201-262-5005
www.hpae.org



STAFFING UPDATE

JOIN US ON MAY 11TH FOR OUR STAFFING RALLY IN TRENTON.

Go to www.hpae.org to register. Transportation provided.

Staffing the hospital continues to be a challenge. Even though we are starting to see some stability on a few of the medical surgical units, the OR and the ED are in crisis mode.

We monitor the staffing numbers on a regular basis. One way of doing this is to review the weekly staffing reports we asked the hospital to send to us. We receive the reports two times weekly.

The report is broken down by units. We are given the hospital and unit census, the number of unit RNs, and how many nurses are over our contractual ratio. We are able to see the number of RN call outs, the number of nurses given LCPTO, the number of nurses who are mandated and the number of RN cancellations. Not to worry, names are not given. These reports are snapshots of 7A, and 7P shifts. Since we all know the patient census is fluent, it is not always exact, but a good insight to the shift.

Recently, on a more consistent basis, we see floors with a better nurse to patient ratio. Many times, there are eight RNs on a floor, and less floors are running with only six RN's. The average number of nurses is seven. Even though the ratios are better at 5:1, acuity is not part of the data.

It's important we receive feedback from all of you, to really understand the reality of this data.

Please continue to contact with any staffing issues in your area. Fill out the Assignment Despite Objection form which is located in your union binder on your unit. Contact a local rep, officer, or post on Facebook if you can't find the forms. Someone will be sure to get them to the unit. Put your completed ADO forms in one of the Union mailboxes.

When you submit an ADO form, please contact Lauren Kelly, HPAE Staffing Committee Chair at lakelly4518@yahoo.com. We review each form. They are also given to the hospital. The hospital is required to respond to each ADO form. They are discussed at our Staffing Committee meetings. It also helps to have these forms to compare with the Staffing reports.

Contact Lauren, or any Officer if you have any questions or comments. You can also reach out to me at jimandpattischarff@msn.com.

Patti Scharff



**RALLY for
SAFE STAFFING**
Thursday, May 11
Trenton NJ

SCAN THE CODE
TO SIGN UP

**NOW MORE THAN EVER,
we need to unite and make
our voices heard in Trenton.**

**Scan the QR code to sign up.
Visit HPAE.org for more information.**

So many of us are exhausted, overworked
and ready to quit. Nearly one third have
already left hospital bedside nursing.

Our patients are suffering.
Lawmakers are failing us.

Now is the time to unite and act.
Spread the word. Share online. Wear your
stickers. And sign up for the May 11 rally today.

