



Message from the President



Hopefully, everyone's doing well and preparing for the holidays! For those of us that have been nurses for many years, there are holiday "tricks" we may have adopted to lessen the difficulty of working holidays, and keep our families happy. If you are a new nurse, or just unaccustomed to working holidays, ask your co-workers what works for them. They may just have some helpful hints!

I want to remind you that you should always take an HPAE representative with you to any investigative meeting with management. You may feel that "it's no big deal" or "they just want to talk, so I can handle it." Even if that is true, it's better to be safe than sorry. You do not want to be caught unaware and then have to go back and fix a costly mistake. There is a list of our local representatives on our website (<http://www.hpae.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/HPAE-Local-5131-Union-Reps.pdf>) Keep calling until you get someone who can accompany you.

If there is something happening in your unit that hasn't been "normal practice" in the past, or it seems to be in violation of our contract, let an officer of the local know. Our contract rights were hard-won and we make every effort to uphold them. But we don't have active union members in every department, so there are situations we aren't aware of unless you communicate with us.

On that note, it is crucial that there be at least one union rep. in each department/unit. Perhaps you don't think you'll ever need one - you don't make mistakes that could require discipline. I may have believed I would never need a rep, once upon a time. But false accusations, as well as genuine mistakes, can happen to any one of us!! No one should have to go through investigative meetings or potential discipline alone. Consider being an active representative for your unit—you would want someone to do that for you.

We are also actively seeking someone to head up our member mobilization. This position would not require a great deal of on-site time, but would focus more on texts, phone calls, emails, and social media activity. Remember, our union can only be strong with active members. Get involved with your local. Learn your contract. Over 800 nurses working together could dramatically improve patient care in the system.

Dana Barrett
President

Know Your Contract

Holiday Rules

Please take note that our contract says:

Holiday scheduling takes precedence over regular work schedules such as regular weekend rotation.

Arrangements may be made between employees to switch holidays. This must be put in writing, signed by both employees and approved by Inspira. The original employee cannot be held responsible to cover the shift if the employee who agreed to cover the holiday calls out or goes on leave. (Article 42.8)

If you are scheduled to work the holiday and call out on the holiday, 48 hours preceding or 48 hours following the holiday, you may not use PTO.

If you are not scheduled to work the holiday, this provision does not apply.

Network Clinical Ladder

Meeting the qualification for formal hospital committee attendance.

If a meeting is canceled by Administration, that meeting counts in the "attending" column as it relates to meeting the criterion of attending 50% of the meetings. In other words, if your committee only meets every other month (6 meetings/year) and one is canceled by administration, the canceled meeting counts as one of your meetings and you would only need to attend two more meetings to meet the criteria. This is outlined in:

Article 70.11 "Meetings missed due to call off by the employer will have the missed meeting counted in the 50% calculation for maintaining their status"

The HPAE staffing committee counts as a hospital committee. We meet every other month. Please contact Michelle Silvio if you are interested in joining this committee.

BLS, ACLS, PALS and NRP

Please be aware that Inspira now accepts approved American Heart Association **online courses** in lieu of actual courses for these programs. Refer to (Article 29.3.5.) This was negotiated in our last contract.

VP Reports

Bridgeton

Hello fellow union team members, my name is Kelly Fordyce, I have been with the system for 12 years, working in the ER as a RN. I am honored and excited to be our new VP of Inspira/ Bridgeton. This includes the ED, adult mental health unit, and the crisis unit. I know I have big shoes to fill, but I am confident I am up to the challenge.

Moving forward we have a lot on our plate, with the construction of the new detox unit and staffing it. I am hopeful that we, as a union, working with management, can give our patients the care they deserve, as our HRO training has taught us. We are all concerned with the staffing issues every unit is enduring, and hopeful to see what the plan will be to fix it. So we can all WOW our patients in a safe manner.

Please feel free to contact me. My information is located on our HPAE website. Let's work together for a great new year.

We, at the Bridgeton campus, are in need of union representatives. People - this union can only work for you, if you are willing to work for it!! Help us help you.

Elmer

As discussed in negotiations, we met with management to establish a holiday rotation that was mutually agreeable. The holiday schedule will remain the same through the New Year 2017 holiday. Then, we will begin the following rotation in 2017:

Rotation A will be- Memorial Day
Labor Day
Christmas

Rotation B will be- July 4th
Thanksgiving
New Year

A and B will rotate every other year.

I would like to take a minute to encourage our membership at Elmer to become active in our union by becoming a union representative. Trainings and education are available to new representatives and our officers and union representative chairperson are always available to the representatives. If you might be interested, please contact me at (856) 358-2854 or (609)319-3862 or Karen Bailey at (856) 558-3273.

Barb Slavoff
VP – Local 5131 Elmer

Contract Updates: Pension Questions, STD, and Long-term Sick

Pension Questions

2015 contributions to the Target Benefit plan were made in September for qualifying employees. Please check your statements with Lincoln Financial. Inspira is awaiting approval by the IRS to release these balances to employees. Once released, employees with plan balances will need to do something with the money – using distribution options outlined in the plan. You can either roll it over to the 403b account with Lincoln, move it to an investment of your choice outside of Inspira or take a cash distribution (that will have tax and penalties for early withdrawal if applicable). Please contact your financial advisor before taking any action with these retirement balances when available.

The Target Benefit plan was replaced with a new 403B employer contribution on a per pay basis. For those who had a 2015 Target Benefit contribution, your 403B contributions were retroactive to January of 2016 on all qualified hours worked. For those who now qualify for the pension but did not have a 2015 contribution, the 403B pension contribution began June 1, 2016. This appears on your paystub under Employer Paid Benefits. This is in addition to any employee contribution to the 403B and does not affect the matching employer contribution currently in place.

All Bargaining Unit members should have received a letter from Inspira in September informing them of the date their contributions began and the percentage contributed. Please check our website for more information and contact the HR service center with any specific questions not addressed. If you need further assistance, please contact a Union officer.

Short Term Disability (STD)

Members have asked if they can collect State disability, LTS, and short-term disability at the same time. This is the response from Inspira HR

“As with any other voluntary benefit the employees purchase on their own, they can apply for payment from that policy outside of any benefit they receive from Inspira. So the answer is yes, employees would apply for state disability benefits, can supplement state disability with LTS hours, and if they choose, they can also apply for the voluntary short term benefit that they purchased. Periodically, the state will send employees notices to verify if they are still on leave and if they are receiving any monies outside of their employer benefit so if an employee were to receive this notice, they would need to answer accordingly.”

It came to our attention that Farmington was denying short term disability to any employee 70 years of age or over. We reached an agreement regarding those employees who were 70 years old at the time of the contract ratification. We also agreed that employees under the age of 70 who elect to enroll in the voluntary short-term disability insurance plan will continue to be covered until they reach the age of 72. Please contact a Union officer if you fall into this category and have any questions.

LONG TERM SICK

LTS stopped accruing for everyone under 70 as of May 31st, 2016. But all members are able to utilize any LTS balances they had in their bank towards an approved medical leave until May 31, 2019. Please contact a Union officer if you have any questions.



Our New Contract is On-Line

Until the new contracts arrive in the mail, you can view the current contract on our website.

Go to HPAE.org and at the top you will find the “local” heading.
Find and click on [5131](#) (that’s our local #)
On the right hand side under “In This Local” click on [Local 5131 Final Contract Draft](#)

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.

Joanne - Our Thanks and Appreciation!!



Joanne Savidge has decided to step down as Grievance Chair of our local. Joanne has worked long and tireless hours fielding phone calls and emails from members who needed advice and/or

needed to file a grievance. She was largely responsible for the success of several class action grievances that benefitted all our members. At least three of our nurses were exonerated and their terminations reversed with Joanne as our Grievance Chair.

She began as the Rep Coordinator, and then accepted the position of Grievance Chair when Karen Bailey suggested she would be a good fit for the job. And she was right on target. Joanne did an exceptional job working closely with our members, hospital administration, arbitration attorneys and legislators. She was a member of our Local Executive Board from the beginning and also served on the HPAE State Executive Council.

Although Joanne often questioned herself, wondering if she could have done more or pushed harder, those of us who worked with her know that our local and our members couldn't have asked for more. Joanne never backed down from a fight and she made sure that administration and our members enforced our contract. We will truly miss her on the Executive Board but we are happy to say that Joanne will remain as one of our Reps!

Thank you, Joanne for your years of hard work and dedication to our members. You have really made a difference!

Rep Corner

Every unit needs a Rep! It is the best way to keep informed about issues and to make sure the contract is being followed in your area. If your unit doesn't have one, we will be holding **Rep Trainings on January 26 at the Fairfield Inn in Millville**. Training takes 2 hours and food will be provided. Bring a friend and represent together! If you have any questions or would like to attend, please get in touch. Email baileyk8@comcast.net or text 558-3273.

FYI- an updated rep list is always available on www.hpaе.org. Click on "locals" and find 5131-Inspira. If you need a rep for a meeting, it is your responsibility to contact reps on the list. Remember - investigation/discipline meetings are to be held at mutually agreeable times so that you have the opportunity to find representation.

Happy Holidays!

Karen Bailey
Rep Coordinator

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.hpaе.org/campaigns/convention2016/) at <http://www.hpaе.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

Staffing Committee Report

30 RNs from throughout our system signed up at our last membership meetings to assist the Staffing Committee. This new Staffing Group met on September 27th and we began working on strategy.

The first step was a review of our new staffing language that gives us the right in certain instances to file grievances related to staffing.

Article 25.2 states that the staffing grids "will be available in the staffing office" of each facility. Our language says that Inspira will notify the Union and "discuss any changes to the staffing grids before such changes are made". To ensure that staffing levels are maintained, the hospital may utilize incentives such as:

- *Posting of overtime or extra time
- *Offering PIP
- *Voluntary on call

Numerous nurses signed up to be the "point person" of their unit to communicate with the Staffing Committee and provide needed information, such as vacancies that have not been filled, staffing problems due to anticipated LOAs that were not addressed, and the direct impact on patient care as a result of holes in the work or on call schedule. We agreed that we would highlight a unit or department at each bimonthly Staffing Committee meeting.

Nurses from Elmer LDRP and Vineland Medical Step-down have been diligent about documenting their staffing problems and were invited to attend our last Staffing Committee meeting. They all did a phenomenal job of standing up for their department and coworkers and speaking directly to Janet Davies and Michele Zucconi about the problems in their department.

Management has been offering sign on bonuses, PIP and contracts throughout the hospital. They have contracted with PD nurses to regularly cover holds in the ED to decompress the department. They are working with two consulting firms to look at the possibility of increasing our bed capacity and ways to improve throughput. I know what you are thinking: we cannot staff our departments now, how will we staff more beds?

We know that vacancies are not posted or filled quickly enough. And the amount of call required in smaller departments like Elmer OR, LDRP and Vineland Cath lab makes recruiting even more difficult. Add a vacancy or LOA to the mix and the call is overwhelming. The Staffing group will help us monitor not only the problem, but whether or not management is attempting a remedy. We suggested a FT on call position and hiring into Baylor positions to free up staff to fill weekday holes.

The Bridgeton Crisis unit has been without an RN on a regular basis, especially at night, placing the responsibility on the ED RNs. These nurses have been consistently filling out the Staffing forms. We just scheduled a special meeting with the director of Behavioral Health about this.

There are no easy answers regarding staffing but we have to remain committed. If you have suggestions, any at all, please contact me at the email below. Between our new contract language, grievances and the help of our new Staffing Group, we will keep the pressure on and we will make a difference!

Michelle Silvio RN
VP Local 5131 Vineland
Silvio8169@gmail.com