

MARCH 2016

5131 Local Beat

NEWSLETTER OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND ALLIED EMPLOYEES
THE PROFESSIONAL NURSES UNION AT INSPIRA

Message from the President

Spring has sprung....and exciting things are happening in your union. We have a full executive board for the first time ever, and we are heading into negotiations for our new contract. I want to thank you all for welcoming me into my new role as President and for your continued support. With all the experience and strength of our officers in place, I know that we will make great strides in the coming years.

I wasn't always actively involved in our union. But things began to change rapidly and drastically in my department, and suddenly giving quality care became very difficult. I decided to become involved in our union as a way of educating myself about our contract and about the way things were supposed to be done. The more I learned, the more there was to do. I think I always knew that we ARE our union, but it became more evident that I needed to do my part.

For a while, my goal was to get another degree and find another job. After all, what could I change? Just one person in a large organization doesn't have much of a voice. But with 860+ nurses—we have an ENORMOUS voice. So I urge you—get involved in YOUR union. Our local is only as strong as its individual members. Do you have an active member in your department? If not, think about being that person. We all have fears; I know your concerns about involvement because I share them. However, when we stand together we are strong and can make a difference!

What does that mean for you individually? It may mean becoming a member of the contract action team, bringing information to your co-workers about the upcoming negotiations. Perhaps your unit needs a union rep—someone to get involved by learning the contract a little better and representing our union for your co-workers. Most importantly, get INVOLVED in our contract negotiations! We can only negotiate a strong and fair contract with the support of our members. We have built our contract proposals based on the surveys you submitted, telling us what you value in your work. Show up for negotiations, making it clear that these things are important to you. All necessary contact information can be found on our HPAE Local 5131 web page - <http://www.hpaе.org/locals/list/southjersey> - and I am always available for any questions. Join us in ensuring the best possible future for our local, our patients and our community.

Dana Barrett RN
President HPAE Local 5131

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.hpaе.org

HPAE Lobby Day:



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 apatel@hpaе.org or call 856-663-0300 ext 307

HPAE Convention October 6 - 7, 2016

Dear Local 5131 Members,

Our local elections took place in February. We had two new officers elected and some shifting of the previous officers to different positions. I would like to ask you to welcome the new President of your local, **Dana Barrett**, and the new VP of Elmer, **Barbara Slavoff**.

I am now the VP of Vineland, **Beth Manganaro** is now the VP of Bridgeton and **Deb Pacitti** is our Secretary Treasurer. **Joanne Savidge** continues as our Grievance Chair and Karen Bailey remains the Rep Coordinator. **Kelly Hobbs** chose to step down from the Secretary/Treasurer position. She has done a wonderful job of keeping our minutes and finances straight over the last few years, as well as being a valued member of the negotiating team for the past three contracts. Our sincere thanks to you, Kelly, for all you have done for Local 5131. We will miss you on the executive board.

We now have the experience of our past officers combined with the enthusiasm and excitement of brand new leaders as we prepare for negotiations that will begin on April 12. We have a Contract Action Team (CAT) in place who will be distributing weekly flyers with updates on bargaining or you can go to HPAE.org and click on our local 5131 page.

As I have said time and again, our members are the key to success at the bargaining table. Our proposals directly reflect the contract surveys that you filled out and the issues our members have brought to us over the last three years, such as protection of our current benefits, safe staffing levels, and wage increases. These issues will be decided at the table in April and May and we will all be living with them for the next three years. Make sure you do your part to ensure the best possible contract.

If you would like to know how you can help, please contact our HPAE Organizer, Fran Campo at 856-663-0300 ext. 303 or fcamp@hpae.org.

In solidarity,
Michelle Silvio RN
VP HPAE Local 5131
Vineland Division

Message from the VP of Elmer

My name is Barbara Slavoff and I have worked night shift in the Elmer ICU for 34 years. I am looking forward to my term as Vice President of the Elmer division. I have been involved with our Union from the beginning, when we organized as SJH nurses. I have been proud to have served as a Union rep for a number of years and I am honored to join our Local Executive Board officers who have worked so tirelessly to represent our members.

Barbara Slavoff
VP HPAE Local 5131
Elmer Division

Count down to Contract Negotiations

We have eleven dates scheduled for negotiations in April and May. **All LOCAL 5131 members are invited to attend negotiations on the following dates.** Come see how it works! And wear your Red HPAE t-shirt.

1. Tuesday, April 12 (in Glassboro @ Marriott Courtyard, 325 Rowan Blvd, Glassboro)**
2. Thursday, April 21 (in Vineland @ Fairfield Inn & Suites, 301 Bluebird Lane, Millville)
3. Wednesday, April 27 (Glassboro)
4. Wednesday, May 4 (Glassboro)
5. Wednesday, May 11 (Vineland)
6. Friday, May 13 (Vineland)
7. Tuesday, May 17 (Vineland)
8. Wednesday, May 18 (Vineland)
9. Wednesday, May 25 (Glassboro)
10. Friday, May 27 (Glassboro)
11. Tuesday, May 31 (Glassboro)

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.

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 HP AE

Holiday Cancellations

There seem to be issues that come up every holiday. Here are the contract provisions which cover holiday call-outs and cancellations:

Article 48.3 on page 44 of our contract says that "if an employee has an unscheduled absence (call out) either on or 48 hours preceding or following a holiday, if scheduled to work, the employee may not use PTO for payment relating to the unscheduled absence. This means that our members may use their PTO for this call out if they were not scheduled to work on that particular holiday.

The holiday rules below apply to bargaining unit members when there are too many RNs scheduled for a particular holiday,

1. The option to take the holiday off is offered to staff in order of seniority - most senior staff down to the least-regardless of FT, PT or PD status.
2. If no one wants to come off the holiday, staff may be cancelled from least senior to most senior on the day of the holiday.
Inspira has taken the position that the contract allows them to cancel staff prior to the holiday and move them to another day in that week if needed. We disagree with this position. We will be attempting to clarify this either through the grievance process or in negotiations. We will let you know the outcome.
3. Anyone cancelled on their required holiday is considered to have fulfilled their holiday obligation.



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