



HPAE

NEWSLETTER FOR *THE NURSES OF*
HPAE LOCAL 5131 AT INSPIRA

LOCAL BEAT NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS

I sincerely hope you've all been able to enjoy the summer, at least in some way. Chances are, it was not quite what you hoped for or what you're used to. It seems that Covid-19 has turned the whole world upside down, and for healthcare workers, the changes have been extreme. Nurses have a tendency to put others first...it's one of our most admirable qualities. However, now, more than ever, it is crucial that as we care for our patients, our families, and our communities, we also care for ourselves. We cannot help others if we are depleted and sick. If you are struggling in any way, please reach out for help. If you go to HPAE.org and click on the Coronavirus resource page, then on the COVID-19 External Resource List near the bottom right under Resources, you'll find helpful options for healthcare workers. Inspira is also offering helpful self-care options through Carebridge and their wellness programs. Look at Inspirahealthnetwork.org. At the bottom of that page is a link to Employee Virtual Meetings and Covid Resources. Finally, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of your local officers, listed in this newsletter and on our local website HPAE.org/local-5131. We are all struggling to some extent in these crazy times, and we should help each other out in any way we can!

I wanted to also make you aware of some legislation that HPAE has sponsored and the current status of that legislation.

S2380/A399 Creates an automatic presumption that essential workers (including healthcare workers) who have contracted COVID 19, have done so in the workplace and are eligible for benefits including Worker's Comp.

S2384/A4129: mandates that healthcare employers-including acute care hospitals- track and report exposures, illness and deaths related to COVID-19.

These bills have both been passed in the House and the Assembly, and are now awaiting Governor Murphy's signature. Unfortunately, while the bills are 'sitting,' many healthcare workers in New Jersey are not being correctly paid by their employers. Healthcare systems continue to tell HCP's who get the Coronavirus that they've acquired COVID-19 in the community and not on the frontlines, caring for the sick. This is absurd and unacceptable. It isn't right that the 'Healthcare Heroes' are not being properly cared for when they are giving their all during this pandemic. Your local officers have reached out to Governor Murphy, urging him to sign this bill and I encourage you to do the same. Please go to NJ.gov/Governor and choose [contact us](#) from the drop down menu at the top right of the blue toolbar, and email governor Murphy. Let's stand together for fair treatment of NJ's heroes.

Please let me know if I can help you in any way. Together, we are a strong and powerful voice for our patients and our colleagues.

In solidarity,
Dana Barrett RN
President HPAE Local 5131

Message from the Vice President - Vineland

Hello everyone! Quite a lot has happened since our last newsletter in February. Covid-19 has essentially put many aspects of our lives on hold, and upended many of our day to day activities, both at work and in our home lives. Working in the hospital now means wearing lots of extra protection (and trying to learn new intern's names/faces without actually seeing their faces). Throughout all the changes that have taken place in our workspaces, the union has been hard at work in the background. We fought to get personal protective equipment for everyone. Many members were instrumental in putting pressure on the hospital to provide this, whether it be through social media campaigns or displaying yard signs (thanks to our union reps for distributing them), or holding administration accountable through questions on town halls. All three of these things got management's attention. I am glad to say our PPE has improved from the process of laundering paper gowns and wearing surgical masks for multiple shifts.

One of the big adjustments during the pandemic was the hospital's disaster plan in relation to staffing. The union was able to have a very limited amount of time to negotiate over these changes and come up with a plan that was better for our members than what was proposed. But then came a change that was not even mentioned in their disaster plan. Many units had their PTO rescinded. Once union officers were made aware of this, we rallied for this practice to stop. It was a top priority in weekly labor management meetings and a class action grievance was filed. We hit a lot of resistance with that issue. But the real progress came when our members stood together, with over 600 people signing a petition for this practice to stop. That certainly got administration's attention, and we were able to make headway with stopping that practice. Unfortunately, it was too late for some that lost PTO before that. That grievance was denied, but is set to go to arbitration, so we can try to head off that process before they try it again in the future.

Thankfully, our area was not hit as hard as it could have been in this first wave of the virus, and many of the preparations that were made were not needed in the end. But if something is going on in your unit due to "covid changes" like taking back of PTO, being told you can't pick up shifts on other units in case there is a "covid surge" in your unit, etc., and it just doesn't seem right to you, reach out to one of your union officers and we can look into it. It may be quite a while before things are back to normal, if we ever get back to our old normal. But we can help each other get through this together. Thank you for all you do.

Karen Johnson RNC-OB
HPAE 5131 Vice President Vineland



Message from the Vice President - Elmer

Hello HPAE nurses. I hope you are all doing well. First off, I would like to tell you how proud I am of my fellow nurses for stepping up to take care of the many sick COVID patients. Your dedication to patient care was remarkable during an extremely difficult crisis. Now that we are entering a more normal time, the cancellations are once again happening to our staff at both campuses. There is a proper way to call off staff before a shift. You should receive the call that you are not needed for work within a reasonable amount of time before you are to clock in for work. If you feel you were called off too close to the start of your shift, please reach out so it can be investigated. The call off books are on each unit and are to be maintained by the nursing staff. If you are called off, please call into your unit to make sure your name is placed in the call off book. If you feel you have been called off out of turn, or too frequently, please reach out to me or any union representative. Several grievances have been won by nurses called off out of turn. What this means is you get paid for a missed shift or your PTO is returned back into your PTO bank. We are currently working on several call offs thru the grievance process.

Many of you may know that there is language in our contract allowing staff to volunteer to pick up time at Mullica Hill. Our bargaining unit has been working tirelessly to enable 5131 nurses to pick up time at the new hospital. Finally, we have education available for the nurses at 5131 to facilitate our working at the Mullica Hill campus. Register for the course through health stream. If you go into the HS catalog, search for MH technology training and available courses will come up for you to register. We are working on getting additional classes added as needs arise.

I want to be clear, working at Mullica Hill is voluntary. We can not be sent to that campus for a critical need, even after you are properly oriented to work there. Working at Mullica Hill campus is on a voluntary basis. Our bargaining unit worked to get the orientation to Mullica Hill to enable staff to make up for hours lost from call offs or to just pick up extra time.

Do not hesitate to reach out to me or any union officer or representative for issues such as contract questions or staffing concerns or general questions. We are here to help. Our contact information can be found on our HPAE 5131 web site. Just be kind and try to think about what shift a rep works before you send a text. A text at 130 am is not great time to reach me.. and likewise a text at 130 in the afternoon would be not the best time to reach our reps that work night shift . So if you are unsure of what shift we work, or you know its an off time to reach out and want to make us aware of an issue in real time, feel free to write an email. We will respond to that type of communication as well and it will not wake us up.

Remember as a union we are stronger when we work together!

Caroline Sands
HPAE Vice President Elmer

Address Service Requested

Hello all, this is Kelly Fordyce RN, your grievance chair. First I would like to thank each and every one of you for your dedication to our patients. You have been an amazing team and I couldn't be prouder of your resilience. My job is to uphold the contract. When management breaks the contract I represent the content of the contract and making sure it's being followed. Having said that, if something is not being followed, I need to know. If you have a question, something doesn't seem right, contact me or a fellow rep. The contract is available online on our HPAE website, HPAE 5131.

If you have been cancelled out of turn, call me or contact another officer. If you are being called into for a meeting, TAKE A REP. I can't stress this enough. I have gone to meetings with staff, who are being suspended and finding that they already had several meetings leading up to this and declined a rep to the prior meetings. A small write up or verbal can just be the stepping stone for a bigger problem down the line. Getting and keeping a record clear is important no matter how small the problem may seem at the time. Please do not ever go to a meeting without a rep. It is your responsibility to find a rep. The most currently list is available on line on the web site. Management has to give you a reasonable amount of time to find a rep. I currently work in the Cardiac Cath Lab, and am in house 4 days a week. If for some reason you can't find someone to go with you, reach out to Karen Bailey, she is our rep coordinator. Following these basic steps protect you.

Fighting the bigger fights

Kelly Fordyce RN HPAE 5131 Grievance Chair
856-381-1423
kellyfordyce@live.com
kellyfordyce@me.com