



The Beacon

May 2016

Message from the President

Workers' rights and unionization are under attack from all directions in our society. It is no different here at Jersey Shore. Management violated our contract before the ink was completely dry. The merger paperwork submitted by Meridian/Hackensack to the New Jersey Attorney General indicated that there were no unions at the two health systems, when indeed there are four locals. (Meridian has since committed to honor our contracts with the new merger.) Our members have been unjustly disciplined and inappropriately paid. Honestly, some days my head just spins, but I am not complaining. I'm here to face the issues and battle back my hardest. My executive board understands what they signed up for and are working tirelessly. But, we (the executive board and I) are not the union. **You are the Union!** Members like you determine the strength and power of our union.

Member involvement and action determine how strong a union is. The executive board and I are just a handful of nurses elected by our co-workers to represent our nurses' union. Our local has over 1100 members. To paraphrase an old quote from President Kennedy, **"Ask not what your union can do for you, but rather what can you do for your union."** We are fortunate to have the backing and guidance of the HPAAE staff. Still, a local is nothing without an active membership.

What can you do? A lot! Come out to our Unit Rep/Membership meetings. Volunteer to become a Unit Rep. Stay informed, become a member of the Google Group. Respond to surveys, like the one about health care costs. Attend and speak up at staffing meetings. Fill out the on-line short staffing form when appropriate. **Know your contract!** Speak up and report contract violations. Attend rallies. Volunteer your writing and/or internet skills by joining the Communications Committee. **We need you; your union needs you!** Contact us at local5058@yahoo.com, if you have any questions about how to get more involved.

I look forward to meeting you and working together. You are the union, make it a great one. United we are strong.

In Unity;
Kendra McCann
President Local 5058

THE MORE YOU KNOW...

The on line Short Staffing form has proven to be an effective tool in our fight for adequate staffing. It has also been successfully used in grievances, as part of the defense, to downgrade or dismiss disciplines against our nurses. Use this form whenever appropriate! Remember, before submitting this form, you must notify the nursing supervisor of a short staffing situation, to allow administration the opportunity to correct the staffing.

Directions for use:

- Log on to a Meridian Computer
- Go to the Meridian Intra-net page
- Locate and click on Resources (top of the page)
- Locate and click on Nursing
- Locate and click on Jersey Shore University Medical Center Staffing form
- Complete required fields (these are marked with a red*)
- Complete form, hit submit

Grievance Update

The Grievance desk has been busy. Our two class action grievances - to restore our health care benefits and to apply the proper wage increase for our members with less than 15 years seniority - were both denied by management. We are continuing to move forward with the grievances and to fight for what is just for our members. If you are incurring costs for In-network physician visits, please let us know and keep your receipts. Use this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/50585138Insgrv>.

Recently, several grievances regarding disciplines of members were denied by management. Several of our members have opted to continue on with the grievance process and fight their unjust disciplines. I implore all nurses to use the on-line short staffing form whenever appropriate; it is really a useful defense tool when fighting disciplines.

On a more positive note, I do have one win that I would like to share. Administration was denying Open Shift incentive to members who worked an extra weekend and received time and a half as the extra weekend incentive. Administration said this would be “pyramiding” and that therefore they could not allow it. In our contract, page 34. Section 7.10, the exception for receiving the Open Shift incentive in addition to other incentives is clearly outlined; and the weekend incentive is not mentioned. We grieved Administration’s denial of Open Shift incentive in addition to weekend incentive and won! Any member who was denied Open Shift incentive because of receiving weekend incentive should go back to their manager with the date worked and ask for the Open Shift incentive. Contact us at local5058@yahoo.com, if your manager is not abiding by this grievance win.

I ask my fellow nurses to be smart; know the contract! If something does not seem right, it probably isn’t. Don’t be afraid to speak up and reach out. We are here to help.

In Unity:
Lourdes Soto
Grievance Chair



CONTACT US

Office - [732-774-9440](tel:732-774-9440) EXTENTION 4

Email - local5058@yahoo.com

Executive Board Officers:

President:

Kendra McCann- Cath Lab-64762

Vice Presidents:

Barbara Boyler- NW6- 63660

Kathy Kochel – Pedi Day Stay-64646.

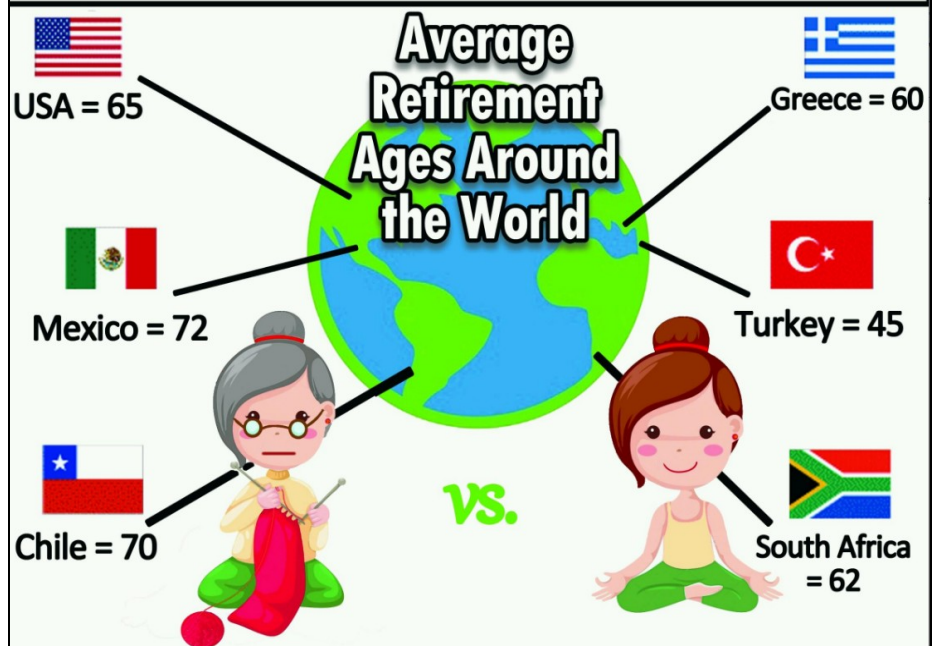
Grievance Chair:

Lourdes Soto- Cath Lab- 64762

Treasurer:

JoAnne Herner- Prompt Care- 6232

FUN LABOR FACTS



Submitted by Holly Brown RN

DATES TO REMEMBER

Unit Rep/Membership Meetings: (Open to all members)

First Wednesday of every other (odd numbered) month

5:30 pm, at our new HPAE office at the Elite Suites Building, Suite 12, 1820 Corlies Ave., Neptune, NJ 07753

Meetings are:

July 6th

September 7th

November 2nd

STAFFING MEETINGS

These meetings are open to all of our members.

The meetings will be at rotating locations in the hospital throughout the year to make it convenient to all staff.

You do not have to wait for the Staffing Meeting to come to your unit.

You are welcome to attend any staffing meeting and discuss the staffing issues on your unit.

The staffing meetings in the morning on the first Wednesday of each month from 630am-8am and the first Thursday night of each month 630pm-8pm. You can call the office at [732-774-9440](tel:732-774-9440) for the exact room location of the staffing meeting you would like to attend.

Meeting Dates:

June 1 6:30 am

June 2 6:30 pm Pedi Nicu and Maternity

July 6 6:30 am

July 7 6:30 pm ED

August 3 6:30 pm

August 4 6:30 pm NWP 2,5,6

Sept 7 6:30 am

Sept 8 6:30 pm Mehandru 5 6 7

Oct 5 6:30 am

Oct 6 6:30 pm Booker 3

Nov 2 6:30 am

Nov 3 6:30 pm Brennan 5 and 6

Dec 7 6:30 am

Dec 8 6:30 pm ICU's

Blue Claws Game

June 16

Free tickets were given to members

AFT Convention

July 18 -21

Minneapolis

HPAE Convention

October 5th and 6th

Atlantic city

Member Spotlight

Rita Hrscko, will retire this year, ending her nursing career that spanned 40 years. When she retires at the end of 2016, she will have worked at Jersey Shore for 35 years. Rita has been active in the Union since its inception. Rita has served as both President and Grievance Chair for Local 5058. Rita sat down with Beacon Reporter Marty Marino.

Beacon: *How did you first become interested in workers' rights and unions?*

Rita: There wasn't one particular time. My grandfather, George Schumacher, was one of the founders of the Bergen County Carpenters' Union. I was raised with unionization my whole upbringing, and never knew any other way. My grandfather always stressed how important qualifications and training were in the skilled types of work. Workers' rights are really not just about the workers; they are ultimately about the "the consumer". It is no different in nursing. Up to date training and skills in our profession is so very important. HPAE has always stood for and fought for adequate orientation and training for our nurses.

Beacon: *What are your recollections of the strike here in 1993?*

Rita: It was a 98-day strike, late 1993 into 1994. In the '93 negotiations, we were just able to SENSE, that something was different that time. Management seemed to be "pushing us" toward a strike. It was around the same time Jersey Shore was looking to merge with what was Brick Hospital and Riverview Medical Center. They really just wanted to "get rid" of our Union, and move on with their merger. We then found out two days before the strike, arrangements to bring in non-union strike-breaking nurses had been made.

Beacon: *What was the reaction of all the nurses when they found about the strike-breaking nurses ready to take your jobs?*

Rita: We were resolved to get prepared. The nurses expressed anger, surprise, and disappointment in the hospital management. Clearly, what Management was saying were the "real issues", were NOT the real issues. There was talk that "the issue" was the proposed merit-pay program. But that and money wasn't it. A strike teaches that you have TREMENDOUS strengths that you never knew you had! Our nurses on strike went to other



Rita Hrscko and her husband Jay Hrscko

hospitals and worked in other areas of nursing that they had never worked in before. Striking is always a last resort.

Beacon: *What's your greatest accomplishment?*

Rita: I've always just tried to be honest. It was never just any one "thing" that I accomplished; honest with everyone; the nurses, the other VPs on the Executive Board, with Management, with everyone. I've have always tried to do what was right for the most of the nurses.

Beacon: *What do you see as this Local Union's greatest accomplishment?*

Rita: We have a good contract that we built on over the years. If I had to say specifically, we always try to do what's fair for the member, to do what's right for the patient---and to do it in the correct way.

Beacon: *As you approach retirement, what hopes do you have for the future of our Local Union?*

Rita: I hope that we remain strong, that we continue to fight to get good, strong contracts. But the hope that I wish the hardest for is to have active member participation. RN's should be involved at every level - to enhance the contract, the patient care, and create the very best environment for the patient and the nurse! Unionization and standing together is THE WAY to steer this ship, to the betterment of the nurses and the patients! I know we all have busy lives, but it has always amazed me that EVERYONE does not come out and get involved.

Beacon: *What are your personal plans for the future?*

Rita: My husband Jay and I are going to retire, completely by year end 2016. We're building a new home in Tennessee, and we have a travel trailer. We're going to travel around the USA.

Beacon: We thank you for your leadership and service. Enjoy your retirement!

You can read Rita's interview in its entirety at www.hpae.org

Message from the President



Protecting Public Services and Democracy in NJ Cities

Public health professionals, residents, public service workers and local elected officials in New Jersey's largest cities are watching with concern as the debate in Trenton continues over the proposed state takeover of Atlantic City.

Placing Atlantic City's resources and workers in the hands of Governor Christie, without any protections for the rights of city residents or workers, sounds alarmingly like what happened in states like Michigan and Wisconsin. I hope Trenton keeps debating alternatives, because the threats to democracy and the rights of public workers can be as serious as the threat of bankruptcy.

After a state takeover of Flint Michigan's city functions and water supply resulted in dangerous levels of lead in city water, one would think caution would prevail. As the Mayor of Flint Karen Weaver testified in Congress "There is no accountability for what these managers do, because they only report to the Governor."

Atlantic City, like many of our older cities, has suffered from the economic recession, as well as from its unique setting as a Casino town. The loss of taxes and jobs due to recent Casino failures has deepened its debt and darkened its financial future.

According to the Atlantic City Press in 2014: "A series of tax appeal settlements and judgments have hammered Atlantic City's bottom line, as the casinos argue their downward spiral means their properties are worth a fraction of what they once were. This year alone, casinos challenged nearly \$2 billion worth of Atlantic City assessments, which together result in almost \$49.2 million in combined city, school and county taxes."

Yet the planned takeover of Atlantic City governance isn't limited to taking steps to right the troubled fiscal situation. It would allow the Director of Division of Local Government Services within the Department of Community Affairs to void contracts, sell off infrastructure, cut public services, fire workers, privatize city utilities, and cancel collective bargaining agreements

for police, firefighters and other city workers. The takeover plan revokes protection for workers from unfair labor practices by their employer, an issue entirely unrelated to finance.

The takeover could eliminate or transfer functions of local city departments like the Department of Health. Local city Departments of Health are essential to protecting the public health, providing immunizations, health education, and local health inspections.

The ranks of Atlantic City police and firefighters have already been cut: firefighters from 272 to 147 and police by 20%; salaries too have been slashed, not only for public safety, but municipal workers too, who have been under a wage freeze since 2011. Wealthy bondholders' money is protected, but city workers making \$22,000 a year will be hardest hit, bearing the brunt of the takeover.

As currently framed, the takeover plan would also eliminate the democratic rights of Atlantic City residents, by transferring the powers of city government to one director appointed by the Governor. The public's right to information – the 'Open Public Records Act' – wouldn't always apply, but the Director could apply it 'to the extent practicable'.

Any major urban city in similar fiscal distress could face the same future if they face similar debt levels, in a process that provides little transparency and few safeguards for public resources and utilities.

A real solution isn't easy, but state involvement should focus on rebuilding a viable economic future for city residents, not just slashing the budget, putting the public's safety and well-being at risk.

Rather than placing control of New Jersey cities in the hands of an unelected director, let's engage community, business and labor leaders, focus on a recovery plan, economic development, and job creation. Let's make sure that any legislation sent to the Governor's desk contains specific benchmarks, careful planning, and protection for democracy and the public interest.



HPAE

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

Address Service Requested

 facebook.com/hpaeaft

COPE Corner

As the general Presidential election rapidly approaches, Americans are being exposed to more and more extensive media coverage regarding the candidates. Freedom of speech has always been one of our most treasured Constitutional rights. Having a voice and being able to express our opinions is a privilege many of us put to good use; however, actually making it to the voting booths is an act that a surprisingly significant percentage of our population fails to carry out. Because of the recent significant and ever-changing issues in healthcare which directly affect our profession and our families, it is imperative to assure that you are eligible to vote in November. Familiarize yourself with the candidates and their issues. Verify that you are still an active registered voter within your county and district and if you have not yet registered, be sure to do so. Below are some useful facts on **voter registration**:

- The US General Presidential Election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 8, 2016.
- Your voter registration must be completed at least 21 days prior to the election.
- Visit the **NJ DEPARTMENT OF STATE** website at: www.state.nj.us/state/elections/index.html. This website provides registration forms for each New Jersey County and includes mailing instructions, deadline information and polling place locations.
- Registrations may also be done through the Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) when applying for or renewing your driver's license. If your residency has changed since the last election, you must update your

voter registration information by completing and submitting a new Voter Registration Application, found on the above mentioned website.

Each year, the HPAE COPE Committee performs extensive research on each candidate and his or her records in order to identify labor-friendly candidates. Questionnaires are sent to each candidate and reviewed. After the questionnaires are evaluated, interviews with the candidates are scheduled by the COPE Committee. Candidates are supported, regardless of their political affiliation, based on a pro-labor and pro-healthcare record set of positions.

The COPE Committee also holds Labor Walks, which are organized gatherings of member volunteers who walk in unity to support or protest a current issue involving the membership or neighboring unions. The purposes of these walks are to make the public aware of important labor issues that may affect their own families, such as hospital staffing issues or benefit continuation. Union members can participate by volunteering for a Labor Walk. Dates, times, issues and locations are listed on the HPAE Website. Stay informed and receive updates on all of the current issues affecting our membership by joining the Local 5058 email list: local5058@googlegroups.com

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE!

In Unity,
Lois A. Webber, RNC