



Message from the President

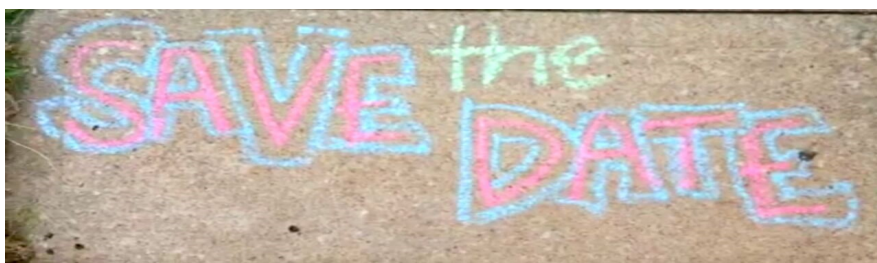
To my fellow union members,

Hello. My name is Adam P. Witt. I'm a nurse in the ED and the new president of HPAE 5058 as of May 1st. Following the standard put forth by our CEO, I could write about my favorite ice cream, recipes for grilling seafood, and my workout schedule leading up to my 5K. But I don't think anyone really cares about those things. I think we care about working in a safe, sane, and stable environment. I think we care about getting paid correctly. I think we care about safe staffing. I think we care about going a week without some policy change that increases our workload, responsibilities, and stress. I think we care about coming into a place where we feel supported and are provided with the staffing, supplies, and appropriate education to treat our patients. And I think the path that Hackensack Meridian has chosen to go down doesn't check any of these boxes.

So, the question becomes, "How do we make our hospital better?" We need to reject the voices that say all of this is inevitable, and that we're part of some big corporate system now, so our individual and collective actions are insignificant. History doesn't support those ideas. Instead, history shows that a determined, driven, and united group of people can push back and win against clunky and slow-to-act behemoths. And we'll become that strong and unignorable group when we recognize that the definition of a union means working together. We need to read our HPAE flyers and emails, show up to union meetings, and familiarize ourselves with our contract and speak out when it's being violated. Will it take work and require us to commit some time to this thing? Absolutely. But the alternative is to do nothing and continue to get steamrolled by a system that has forgotten the importance of the word "care" in "healthcare."

Myself and the rest of the union board will be circulating the hospital in the coming weeks. Talk to us. Tell us the issues on your unit. Use our email at local5058@hpae.org to register your concerns. And then participate. Join the board. Join a committee. Let's create an environment that's the emotionally, ethically, and financially fulfilling workplace we deserve. And if you're wondering, I like cookie dough, I can't grill because I live in an apartment, and I currently have no intent to run a 5k.

That's it for now 5058. Let's do this.
Adam P. Witt



HPAE Professional Issues Conference

October 10, 2019

East Brunswick Hilton
3 Tower Center Boulevard
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Local 5058 Grievance Report

We have been very busy since the contract was ratified in December. The employer has been violating the contract on a daily basis and our members are standing up for their rights at every turn.

Recent Wins:

- **Vera Dasilva** won her case to transfer to Maternity. She never gave up fighting for her rights.
- **Judy Smutko** will return to work on June 11 after being wrongfully terminated from the NICU. Judy demanded justice and would not settle for a payout in exchange for her job.
- The nurses of maternity won an increase in the amount of available PTO on weekends"

Ongoing Cases:

- Part Time Status 3 nurses are fighting to maintain their frozen PTO bank.
- Per Diem nurses in the float pool and maternity are asserting their right to sign up in open shift for their requirement
- Numerous nurses have not been paid out their PTO after changing to PD status.
- The payroll disaster. Management owes people money and answers. The grievance is scheduled for June 18th. Be sure to let us know outstanding payroll errors
- **Diane Deluca** of maternity was terminated from employment after 12 weeks on leave of absence. The contract clearly states she has six months of protected leave for a comparable position. She is prepared to go public on this issue.
- A member has been denied access to health care coverage after a life changing event. This is a federal and contractual violation.
- Performance Evaluations can be grieved. Join the class action to challenge the arbitrary scores that lower your raise.
- Numerous nurses are not being paid extra weekend pay when they work more than every other weekend. Read your contract and know your rights about extra weekend. This is a common contract violation. We have won back pay in the past and we will fight to win it this time.

If you have a concern, reach out to the local at local5058@hpae.org and ask to speak to a rep. You make the Union

Meet the Newly Elected State President of HPAE: Deborah White, BSN, RN

This interview took place with Debbie White (D), BSN, RN; HPAE's newly elected State President and our Beacon Reporter.

B: Debbie, can you please tell us a little about your background?

D: Sure. I was raised in South Jersey, in Willingboro located in Burlington County, and moved to Marlton, NJ also in Burlington County, where I currently reside. I received my BSN from Rutgers University 30+ years ago. My first RN position was at West Jersey Hospital, which later became Virtua Health System, where I've worked as a long term med-surg nurse.

B: How did you first get involved with HPAE at Virtua, and what positions have you held?

D: I was involved in the initial union organizing campaign at Virtua and HPAE in 1996. I then was asked by my Local Union officers to become a Union Rep shortly thereafter. I knew it was important for RNs to have a voice in our working conditions, and sat on every contract negotiating committee at Virtua from 1999 through 2018. I was appointed Grievance Chairperson for my Virtua Local in 2007, and was elected President of my Virtua Local #5105 in 2010. I remained in that position thru 2018. I also became involved with the State HPAE Office sitting on the HPAE Executive Committee for 7-years, and was most recently Chair of the Executive Committee, before being elected State President of HPAE in late 2018, when our first State President, Ann Twomey, retired after over 40-years of dedicated service to HPAE as State President.

B: Why did you decide to run for State President of HPAE?

D: The simple answer is because I was asked to run by a number of union leaders whom I have worked with for years, and whom I greatly respect.

B: What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing HPAE and healthcare workers in the immediate future?

D: We have several challenges that we need to confront. First is safe staffing in hospitals. The current regulations

have not been updated since around 1987 and are woefully inadequate. For most hospital based units, there simply are NO set ratios to protect our patients and studies are clear that when staffing is better, patients do better. Our Union has worked hard on this issue for over 10-year and we will continue to do so.

Secondly, workplace violence remains a serious issue right here in NJ, and in fact throughout the country. Our national affiliate, AFT (Healthcare Division) is promoting a national bill, known as HR1309, which addresses Workplace Violence in HealthCare Institutions by introducing an enforceable standard to OSHA regs. We are currently lobbying our own legislature to gain support in NJ.

Third is the "consolidation" of healthcare; the virtual disappearance of individually managed hospitals and the unrestrained growth of massive hospital systems. Home-town example, Hackensack Meridian Health, and the RWJ-Barnabas Healthcare System, are clear examples and we see very limited oversight from state regulators. HPAE is in the process of updating our Strategic Plan and developing strategies around this issue.

B: What message do you have for our co-workers at JSUMC and our over 13,000 HPAE members throughout NJ and Philadelphia?

D: Here it is and it is nothing new: **We are strongest when we are UNITED and involved!** I'd like to encourage every HPAE member, and every JSUMC RN, to get involved in your local. There are a multitude of ways to be active no matter how much time you have to offer. Talk to your local leaders and fellow members, especially in light of the up-coming contract campaigns.

B: If an individual JSUMC RN wishes to contact you, how can they do so?

D: Just send me an email, to "dwhite@hpaearg" and I'll be sure to respond to you.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marty Marino, MS, BSc, BSN, RN & CADC Intern
HPAE At-Large Member, Union/COPE Representative & Public
Policy Activist*