



Message from the President

Negotiations 2017—Your Input is Needed on September 14th

Next year is a negotiating year and we need to be prepared. Things are changing rapidly in healthcare and we want to make sure we are planning early.

Your Local Executive Board will be in the cafeteria on Wednesday, September 14th, from 9am to 8pm, for an all-day contract negotiations prep session. Please look for us, stop by our table and give us your input.

We are looking for specific proposals or suggestions about sections in the contract that may need to be addressed. We can also share with you some things we have already anticipated.

If you would like to schedule a unit meeting with us, let us know that as well. Please come out and talk to us!

Deb White, President

Progress on Health and Safety: Nurse Returned to Work After Arbitration Victory, OSHA Inspection of Safe Patient Handling at the Hospital

Our local union put another RN back to work!! After a five-day long arbitration hearing, the arbitrator's decision brings RN Sharon Hopkins back to work in the OR. Sharon was terminated after she was prematurely required by the Virtua Workers Compensation team to perform a FCE ("Fit-for Duty Test") after she sustained a back injury at work. This FCE required Sharon to lift 100 pounds before her back injury was allowed to fully heal. YES—you read it right—100 pounds!

Despite the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommendation—issued in 1994—of a 35-pound maximum weight limit for patient handling tasks, **Virtua still has a job requirement (for nurses only) to be able to lift 100 pounds.** We are not training for the USA Olympic weight lifting team!! This case had many different facets to it that were discussed over the five days of testimony including: discrimination for filing a workers compensation claim, discrimination for age and gender, and violation of state and federal Safe Patient Handling Standards. Sharon was a fabulous witness and I am SURE her co-workers were thrilled to have Sharon, a Virtua employee of 30 plus years, back working in the Operating room! Safe Patient Handling has become a hot topic for us because of this 100 pound lift requirement. **Virtua refused to change the lift requirement, so we called OSHA to investigate.**

Some of you may have noticed an OSHA representative on your unit or department. Local 5105 President Debbie White went along and sat in on the 30+ interviews conducted, mostly with our members, although other staff asked to be interviewed as well. After several days of these interviews, it became clear that:

1. We don't have enough equipment to assist with lifting and handling patients.
2. Most nurses have not been educated on the use of these devices, let alone know where to find one of these devices when needed.
3. Most of the devices we do have had dead batteries, were stored in obscure areas and were not accessible to staff when needed.
4. Several of our members were seriously injured from patient lifting and handling.

In 2008 New Jersey passed a Safe Patient Handling Act (SPHA) which mandates hospitals to establish safe patient handling committees with at least 50% of the members actually being hands on health care workers. The SPHA requires hospitals to have SPH programs and policies on all units and all shifts.

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“GET INVOLVED!”

We’ve all cared for tough patients—those who can never be satisfied-- and know that should one of them complain about us, our Employer will most certainly not have our backs.

The important thing is for all of us to stick together. If we are really doing our job as a Union, we have colleagues we can trust who will go to bat for us during these tough times.

Recently, there was a discipline given based on a patient complaint. We knew that the patient who complained was an especially difficult patient for most of the staff.

However, I was so disheartened to hear (indirectly) that one of the staff, who also had a difficult time with this patient, “didn’t want to get involved” by providing a statement for her coworker. The statement might have helped this coworker.

Should this person ever be on the receiving end of a discipline, I’m sure they’ll want and need the support of their coworkers. I hope they don’t get wind that their coworker, who could be helpful, “doesn’t want to get involved.”

Please GET INVOLVED! You truly can make a difference for someone. We are strongest when we stand together.

Beth Cohen
Three Northeast (and proud of it!)
Secretary / Treasurer

WHY WAS OSHA AT OUR HOSPITAL? *continued from page 1*

The SPHA also requires hospitals to have a plan for prompt access to patient handling equipment. It requires that the policy be posted in a location easily visible to staff, patients and visitors to minimize unassisted patient handling. It also protects any health care worker against any retaliation for refusing a patient handling task due to a reasonable concern about patient safety, or lack of appropriate and available patient handling equipment.

Do you know where the SPH equipment is on your floor? Has your manager been proactive with SPH education and awareness? Have the nurse educators on your floor made SPH an educational priority? Our local union has challenged Virtua regarding their lack of adherence to many aspects of the SPHA and has been proactive by placing strong union members on the Safe Patient Handling Committee so we have a hands-on positive voice for our patients and our backs!

As soon as OSHA has finished their investigation, we will let you know the outcome. Stay tuned. We also believe we can impact this 100 lb. lift requirement for nurses. Stay tuned!

Homecare/CNS Update

You are all aware of the time involved with the new SHP program this summer. I am hearing it is to be done in the am prep time or post time or in case management time.

NOT TRUE! You need to bill for every minute spent on SHP! Put in time log under a separate office time and write in note at bottom: SHP. If you come in and meet with Diane or a manager, put in all time spent.

Case Management time is for doing your schedule, phone calls to MDs and families, ordering supplies, finishing discharges, cleaning out bag and trunk, etc.

We will be having an evening meeting in September or October to begin the process of what you would like addressed in negotiations. Bring your contract and bring productive ideas for changes. Will email the date for September.

Call me if any questions at 609-790-9197.

Molly Kirkpatrick
Grievance Chair

Know Your Contract: Side Letter 5

In 2011 we negotiated this side letter located all the way in the back of in our contract on [page 94](#):

Staffing Committee

Where the Staffing Committee identifies a staffing pattern or other staffing issue which both parties agree would benefit from further discussion, the parties shall have such discussion, involving the VP of Patient Care and nurses from the unit and shift involved, at a Staffing Committee meeting or other mutually-agreed upon forum.

Little did we realize then how valuable this would be to us. To date we have scheduled multiple unit meetings that have resulted in better staffing in these areas. Three units that have recently benefitted from this language are Endoscopy, Emergency Room and Labor and Delivery.

Do you have staffing issues in your unit? Fill out unsafe staffing forms and call us for a meeting.

Deb White, President

Unsafe Staffing situation forms 2015

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ICU	1	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	3	4
2N	13	4	1	3	2	3	2	1	3	2	3	0
3NE	22	40	28	24	22	16	6	3	10	12	12	10
4NE	5	7	3	1	2	2	4	0	1	2	4	1
4NW	7	6	2	4	4	3	0	1	5	4	1	1
5St	5	9	2	5	6	4	0	0	3	0	0	2
7St	8	8	8	5	5	3	4	2	0	1	0	0
Peds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MBU	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	3
SCN	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Endo	2	0	0	0	1	2	5	3	2	3	5	6
SPA	3	3	5	1	0	0	3	1	2	1	8	2
BHU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ED	13	4	7	0	0	3	8	0	3	0	1	2
OR	1	1PACU	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
L&D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	2	0	1
3NW	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Unsafe Staffing situation forms 2016

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ICU	2	4	2	4	2	1						
2N	2	5	5	14	3	3						
3NE	25	23	26	26	17	17						
4NE	2	2	17	28	23	23						
43NW	15	0	3	1	10	5						
5St	7	3	2	9	2	4						
7St	2	3	9	10	4	9						
Peds	0	0	0	0	0	0						
MBU	0	3	1	1	0	0						
SCN	0	0	0	0	1	1						
Endo	2	1	2	3	3	1						
SPA	0	2	4	1	2	0						
BHU	0	0	0	0	0	0						
ED	10	5	5	15	11	0						
PACU/OR	1	1	0	1	1	5						
L&D	5	4	11	4	2	5						
Total	73	56	87	117	83	74						

12 4 14 27

Making Memories and Staying Connected

Celebrate Labor Day with union member only Savings from AFT+.

Savings on just about everything from clothing and flowers to gift certificates. Discounted tickets to movies, plays, sporting events and theme parks. Great deals on car rental, travel and more.

Stay connected with 15% off qualified AT&T wireless plans through Union Plus+.



UnionPlus.org/AFTDiscounts

*Available only to current members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions. Must provide acceptable proof of union membership such as a membership card from your local union, a pay stub showing dues deduction or the Union Plus Member Discount Card & subscribe to service under an individual account for which the member is personally liable. Offer contingent upon in-store verification of union member status. Discount subject to agreement between Union Plus and AT&T & may be interrupted, changed or discontinued without notice. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice & data plans, not overages. Not available with unlimited voice plans. For Family Talk, applies only to primary line. For all Mobile Share plans, applies only to the monthly plan charge of plans with more than 300MB, not to additional mobile device access charges. May take up to 2 bill cycles after eligibility confirmed & will not apply to prior charges. Discount applied after application of any available credit & may not be combined with other service discounts. Additional restrictions apply. Contact AT&T at 866-499-8008 with questions.

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HPAE CONVENTION 2016: “Challenging Corporate Healthcare”

October 6 – 7, 2016 Bally's Atlantic City



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HEAR FROM national healthcare advocacy experts, including Jessica Curtis of Community Catalyst and Dr. Fred Hyde from Columbia University, on the trends in corporate healthcare affecting our members and communities.

DISCUSS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES for challenging corporate healthcare in bargaining, organizing, community alliances, and politics.

VOTE ON HPAE's strategic plan for challenging corporate healthcare, and updating our union's constitution, bylaws and dues.