



Message from the President

SILENCE IS NOT POWER

As most of you know it is time once again for contract negotiations. As those before me have repeated year after year, an Executive Board cannot wage the war alone. In order to have some bargaining power at the table, HMH needs to know that there is a hospital full of nurses who support those at the table.

While some nurses are supporters and/or activists there are others who show no interest. Your contract is not a "given". Without a contract you are owed nothing. If you "like" your manager, that's great. But they could be gone tomorrow in the world of corporate America. But you will still be here.

It is imperative for all nurses to speak up for themselves and their patients. Women did not get the right to vote by sitting home in silence. They marched, attend rally's, and spoke up. You need to do the same.

Barbara Bosch
Local 5138

IT IS TIME FOR SOLIDARITY

As our union leadership begins another contract negotiation I have been reflecting on the last fifteen years since we fought together and unionized. July 25, 2003 the nurses at Southern Ocean County Hospital (SOCH) voted to be represented by Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE). It was a landslide victory. In 2003 the nurses of SOCH decided it was time to have a voice in our working conditions, patient safety, wages and benefits. We were frustrated when a nurse was "pulled" from her area of expertise and skill mix and placed arbitrarily in a department that they were not oriented or trained. Not all registered nurses are trained to care for trauma patients in the emergency room or critically ill, unstable intensive care patients on ventilators and vasopressors. In the years before we had no contract language to protect our licenses and no recourse to object to these unsafe conditions. In 2003 we also decided it was time to put a stop to managers playing favorites. One manager hired an RN with the agreement that she would never have to work a Christmas Eve or Christmas day. SOCH managers had a history of posting a new human resource policy to benefit management and immediately make changes to their policy if it didn't fit their needs. For example, a notice was hung that no nurse could take vacation time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day! But of course, if your manager was your friend that new rule didn't apply!

Another main concern we organized for was to be rewarded for professional development and education. Never was an RN in 2003 given any encouragement to pursue a National Certification or degree advancement. It had been twenty years since SOCH management increased our tuition reimbursement policies.



To my fellow SOMC nurses, some of whom I have known for the last 37 years and others who are new to their nursing career, it is time for solidarity!! We are up against a big corporation: Hackensack-Meridian. Our contract negotiations will be more challenging than ever before. This corporation is already attempting to strip us of our gains we have made in the last 15 years. We must fight these takebacks! Nurses are the largest workforce in healthcare. We have strength in numbers. Wear your pin, attend your rallies and rep meetings. Let your voices be heard before that right is stripped away too!

In Solidarity,
Julie George RN, BSN, CCRN, CBN

AFT OFFERS IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION

Identity theft has become the fastest growing crime in America, because of this, protecting your identity is something we take very seriously!

On July 1 we will launch a new identity theft benefit for ALL active and retired members. We are excited to offer two tiers of benefits: a series of free services available to ALL members upon registering, and a second tier that can be purchased. The latter is an additional tier of identity theft protections which provide active identity theft monitoring and unlimited restoration and recovery services, as well as \$1,000,000 in identity theft insurance.

starting **July 1st** the specifics the **FREE** identity theft benefits are:

- An online Safe Wallet for securely storing ID information and account numbers
- Assisted restoration & recovery services
- Access to a fraud resolution specialist for advice
- \$10,000 identity expense reimbursement with zero deductible
- Emergency response kit
- Sixty minutes of legal consultation concerning each new issue involving theft of identity

Once a member registers, they'll be offered additional benefits for purchase that are comprehensive, competitively priced, and include:

- SSN monitoring 24/7
- Single Credit bureau monitoring 24/7
- Debt & credit card monitoring 24/7
- Data sweep monitoring 24/7
- Change of address monitoring 24/7
- Family ID monitoring 24/7
- \$1,000,000 ID theft insurance
- Alert notifications
- ID Threat Score
- Unlimited restoration & recovery services
- Family ID recovery (if purchased family plan)
- Financial coaching consultations
- Tax Fraud Assistance

For more information visit www.hpae.org



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A Newsletter for the
Members of hpae Local

Address Service Requested

A letter to my colleagues

Before SOMC had a nurses union, we were ‘at will employees ‘ in the state of NJ.

*At-will employment is a term used in **U.S. labor law** for contractual relationships in which an employee can be dismissed by an employer for any reason (that is, without having to establish "**just cause**" for termination), and without warning,^[1] as long as the reason is not illegal (e.g. firing because of the employee's race or religion). When an employee is acknowledged as being hired "at will," courts deny the employee any claim for loss resulting from the dismissal. The rule is justified by its proponents on the basis that an employee may be similarly entitled to leave his or her job without reason or warning.^[2] In contrast, the practice is seen as unjust by those who view the employment relationship as characterized by **inequality of bargaining power**.^[3]*

Let’s take a walk down memory lane together in the life of the registered nurses at SOMC before we had a union:

In the good old days when you were flexed at 0900 or 2000 due to lower census, you were forced to remain available for the remaining hours of your shift. You received no call pay, had no options, and had to run your vacation bank down to pay yourself. Now repeat that 15 times in 6 weeks and see how many vacation days you have left for the year. Who was selected was arbitrary and capricious. They kept agency nurses and per diem over full and part timer staff.

When we went many years without a pay raise, when we had no compensation for degrees, no compensation for national certifications, when we had no preceptor pay, when you found out management filled a hole by paying a nurse who had minimal experience the same as someone who had 17 years of experience at SOMC.

When the Board of Trustees voted to terminate our defined benefit pension plan in 1992 and sent out the letter the week of Christmas. As mostly young working mothers in those days, we had to scramble to figure out how to save for our retirement, which was horrible as we had no extra money, constant flexing, few raises, and no voice.

When vacations were prohibited between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day.

To quote the compassionate head of human resources in those days “if you don’t like it, leave” and “suck it up” to the nursing staff concerns.

In 2003 we overwhelmingly elected to raise our collective voice to have a seat at the table. To shift the power base from a paternalistic organization. No longer would we accept a pat on the head and the ‘father knows best’ model.

The union is not just about maintaining fairness in the work place, but the right to negotiate anything to do with our hours, our wages, and our working conditions. This impacts us everyday and it significantly influences our patients care.

We ask management to give us the proper resources, the appropriate tools, and to provide a safe environment to deliver to our patients the very best care. As a collective unionized voice we want an environment of excellence for ourselves and our patients.

We are not quitters, we are compassionate nurses who accomplish our job under stress. Failure was not an option, we are dedicated nurses who always stay the course. We did not leave, we are caring nurses who have never abandoned our patients. We do not accept second best, we are top tier nurses who demand excellence for our patients. We knew the answer was with us, we are smart and innovative nurses who have learned to create solutions when working short staffed and told to “make do” with subpar resources. We have worked hungry, came in early, stayed late, worked our days off, worked when our backs ached, our necks spasmed ,our feet sore, our legs cramped, and our bladders ready to burst.

Management did not have our best interest in mind, management’s job is to run the business in the most economical model and to reward upper management for their success, not our accomplishments.

SOMC is a wonderful hospital because of us, it’s remarkable nursing staff.

Be proud, be loud, be supportive of your union, support each other.

In unity,
Kathleen Whalen BSN, RN-BC, CCRN, CMC

SAVE THE DATE

HPAE Convention

October 4—5

Harrah’s Resort—Atlantic City