



# HPAE

## LOCAL 5105 Newsletter

THE PATIENT ADVOCATE  
A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS  
OF HPAE LOCAL 5105 AT VIRTUA  
MEMORIAL/CNS

THE PATIENT ADVOCATE

February 2019

## Negotiations 2020

Believe it or not our present contract expires May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020! Negotiations 2020 is just around the corner! A successful contract campaign doesn't just happen, it relies on careful campaign planning and widespread member participation. Early planning is perhaps the single greatest factor in determining success or failure. The best contract campaign plans are those that are designed to build, strengthen and unify the local which in turn increases our power and wins a better contract! Also, creative and aggressive campaign tactics such as button days, leafleting and informational picketing are great ways to demonstrate member solidarity, resolve and willingness to act. The most important source of power we have as a union is our members and unity.

Our local has always viewed negotiations and collective bargaining as more than just an occasion to gain specific improvements in our contract, such as wage increases or staffing language. Just as important, contract negotiations provide us with an opportunity to build the economic and political strength of the Union. In order to achieve our goal of winning the best possible contract, it is imperative that members be directly involved in every aspect of our contract campaign. I urge members to start thinking of how they can get involve this negotiation year and be an important part of our success!

At least a year in advance not only do we need to identify contract issues specific to our state and local union during our planning stage, but we need to set goals for our campaign and develop a strategic calendar. We also need to identify our research needs. Research can be an effective and critical tool for winning a strong contract especially with our employer building, acquiring and expanding it services throughout South Jersey. Using this research and our strategic plan we need to develop a positive public message which will educate the public and gain their much-needed support surrounding our major contract issues.

Soon we will be sending out member surveys and holding pre-negotiation membership meetings to allow members to voice their opinions on possible contract proposals and what issues should be the main focus. We will be seeking out members to be part of our Contract Action Team (CAT). The most important activities of the CAT are to communicate with and mobilize the membership, as well as help with local and state-wide mobilization events. We will also be seeking members to be a part of our 2020 negotiation team as well as unit leaders for break out session to address unit specific contract issues during negotiations.

Again, you are the union and by engaging in some or all of these activities you can guarantee that the union is successful in getting the best contract possible and is representing your interests.

Your Union Sister,  
Sheryl Mount President Local 5105

## Grievance Update Winter 2019

Well the year has definitely started out busier than we would have liked it to be. I am surely getting a crash course in the grievance process. Currently the union is in the process of several grievances – 7 to date to be exact. We have several Class action grievances out for both Critical/Summer PTO denials for the OR/ICU as well as for the OR internship. Class action grievance for the OR internship has been moved to Arbitration; we are just waiting on a date. We have very specific language speaking to internship programs offered to members in Article 4.9. Although many issues with the internship job posting were corrected through the grievance process Virtua would not bend on the internship BSN requirement which is NOT supported by article 4.9#. We are also currently working on the Class Action Grievance for 3 NE for repeated safety issues including the mismanagement of violent patients. Our goal is to keep employees safe, maintain a safe and healthy work environment, and have Virtua follow its own policy regarding violence in the workplace. This is all following the incidents of repeat violence of patients towards nurses on 3 NE. Virtua has repeatedly stated that they feel they do follow the Violence Prevention policy but are willing to partner with the Union to enhance Violence Prevention policy and strategies. Our goal is to partner with management and start a Violence Prevention and Safety meeting specifically for Memorial RN's to voice their concerns and strategize ways to maintain safe work environments.

We would like everyone to make sure they are keeping up to speed with the new HRO process. Be aware of the RL, which is the new online incident reporting system. Unfortunately, historically Virtua has chosen to use nurse generated incident reports to spring board into the disciplinary process. We have several disciplines which were born from nurse generated occurrence reports. Some other lingo Virtua is choosing to use in disciplining members is- Violation of Standard of Care (Prompt disposition of patients out of the ED to the floors and Violation of Philosophy of Nursing Policy (refusing to take report in a timely fashion). This in efforts to decompress the ED and facilitate patient movement throughout the house. They are also using Disciplinary Action reasoning using the Virtua Star: failure to uphold Virtua Star Values: Best People; and Customer Loyalty.

We encourage you all to mindful of one another, we are all working hard, short staffed and attempting to care for our patients in the best way possible. Be supportive of one another, appreciate each other's struggles and work together. We are all her for the same reason, to provide exceptional care to our patients. By staying strong, working with one another and supporting one another, we can do so in a caring culture environment. Communicate with one another and come up with solutions among team members. Exercise the self-governance ability we have seen our members possess and demonstrate daily. This can help to deter disciplines and elevate self-resolution. Remember February is American Heart Health Month. Take time out for yourselves and open you hearts to help support and keep each other happy and healthy in our work environment.

Yours In Solidarity,  
Bonnie Terwilliger. RN~ BSN  
Local 5105 Grievance Chair

## Committee on Political Education (COPE)

In NJ, we could not have had a better outcome in this election. Certainly appreciate that so many of you came out to knock on doors and also to vote Now we have a little reprieve to enjoy the holidays and get through the winter months. In the spring, we need to continue to make sure everyone is registered to vote and that they are ready to come out once again to vote in November. 2019 will be about local elections and local politics. HPAE is here to encourage you to take a step out in confidence and run for office. We need people to run for school board, town council and mayor, freeholder and State Assembly. We are here to help you. There is an AFL-CIO school each August to teach what makes a successful campaign. Our COPE fund will support you with dollars if you take that course and run for office. This was the most successful election for the AFL-CIO for Congressional Candidates. All of their chosen Congressional Candidates won. Now we have to hold them to their campaign promises as they take office in January.

Your COPE Representatives Jenn Pepe, Melody Schantz and Claudia Storicks

## Incident Investigation

A major win during our last negotiation- 2017, was side letter 9-Electronic “Unsafe Staffing Forms” The new contract language states: (The Employer and the Union agree to develop an electronic “Unsafe staffing Form” which will be accessible to bargaining unit members. The parties shall work together to develop this form and anticipate that it will be implemented no later than October 31, 2017)

The purpose of this new electronic form was for unsafe staffing to be more transparent, management to be aware of unsafe staffing more real time than previously and to have a more accurate and efficient way to record unsafe staffing.

Our Go Live with the electronic unsafe staffing forms was April 10, 2018. We offered several education sessions to members. If you have not had the opportunity to fill out an online unsafe staffing form, here is how it can be done:

1. Go to VINE
  2. Open Software Links
  3. Open Unsafe Staffing Situation Form Complete Form completely.
- Date (Date situation occurred )  
Unit (Unit situation occurred) - (careful not to keep default unit of 2N )  
Time/Shift (include am or pm)  
Supervisor/Mgmt notified (Notify Mgr or nursing flow supervisor/Mgmt)  
Signed- add all nurses that give permission to be added on form for unsafe staffing situation

Actual & Expected Unit Census, Staffing: PCT, RN, US- all complimenting and supporting nursing  
Check boxes that apply to situation.

Description of occurrence in final box.

The first month of 2019, we had 143 unsafe staffing forms- mostly on med Surg floors such as 3NE, 4NE & 4NW and also on 2N.

I can not stress enough the importance of filling out the unsafe staffing correctly and completely. Nurses that have been reported to the Board of Nursing in NJ- generally look to see if an unsafe staffing form was filed when their incident occurred. We will post in the HPAE bulletin board how to fill out unsafe staffing forms.

We are in need of a med surg representative in staffing committee...if you are interested in attending or joining staffing committee please reach out to me. We need engaged, passionate staffing nurses. Consider attending or joining.

Lorraine Thone  
VP Hospital  
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Many of us panic as soon as we are told by the boss, “We need to meet!” Keep your head on straight and try not to get frazzled. As per contract you have 24 hours to get a union representative to go with you into any investigatory interview by management. Weingarten Rights guarantee an employee the right to Union representation during an investigation BUT as per these rights it is the member that must ask for a rep and ask if the requested meeting could lead to possible disciplinary action. This person doesn’t have to be a Rep from your unit. It could be any bargaining unit member who is willing to go with you and take good notes. It is very important that notes are taken because they may be used later if indeed the investigation leads to discipline. Focus on answering questions truthfully with ONLY the facts. But first, remember to ask what the meeting is about and if it could lead to discipline. There is no grey line for discipline as an answer – if the boss can’t tell you definitely “no” then get someone to sit with you and do not go in alone.

Familiarize yourself with the “Bait and Switch.” You go in to talk about something non-disciplinary or are talking casually about something random and then the boss says: “Well- what about this time with so and so?” Or my personal favorite – “Can we talk about such and such?” Be careful – these are traps meant to look like casual conversation but in reality, they are tactics used by management to get the information they can later use against you. This also applies to conversations in the hallway.

Also, please let someone from the executive board know that a meeting will be taking place or has taken place. This may be an ongoing issue that is in the process of being discussed in Labor Management, for example. Please make a copy of any notes from meetings and either email, take a pic or let us know you’re dropping them in the mailbox. Get those notes to us asap. Thanks!

So, what is the difference between a disciplinary meeting and an investigatory meeting? An investigatory meeting is the employer opportunity to investigate and may lead to future discipline. Disciplinary meetings should happen AFTER the employer has done a full investigation of events leading to discipline. Some bosses like to call investigation meetings “information gathering sessions, etc.”. They could also be called “fact-finding”. If an issue is brought to management, it is the employer’s obligation to investigate. Do not volunteer to help. Your part is to tell the facts and only the facts. **These meetings should be in person ONLY**. Phone meetings are not recommended because it just you and manager and can lead to “he said, she said” situations. Do not respond to investigative emails or texts in writing. They could be used against you. Ask for an in-person meeting.

Lastly, please ABSOLUTELY DO NOT offer to write or sign a statement, attestation or anything of the like. Even if it seems like you are signing a paper with the facts DO NOT DO IT! They probably will be used against you. We have seen it happen and you may find yourself sitting on Virtua’s side during an arbitration, testifying against a peer.

Beth Cohen, Secretary Treasurer  
856 296 6439 [tokidsbeth@aol.com](mailto:tokidsbeth@aol.com)

### Education Dinner and General Membership meeting with CEUs April 8 @ Hotel ML 5pm

“Incident Investigation”  
speaker Kathy Gialanella, Esq.

Sign up at [www.hpae.org](http://www.hpae.org) under Local 5105  
Join our Facebook group Memorial RNs (HPAE)



A Newsletter for the members of HPAE  
Local 5105 at Virtua Memorial/CNS

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## Address Service Requested

### Home Care: 2/2019

Hi all,

With the start of OASIS D we have found new requirements such as, communication and corrections made to documentation related to GG questions answered by Nursing vs. Therapy, have added more time and responsibility to our jobs. This information is not only important to Medicare for documentation but specifically for supporting payment for care of each patient.

As Nurses, we want the best for our patients but also must recognize our care and what that care entails. We are just now beginning to appreciate the amount of change and effort that EPIC has brought on to us as a department and as an Organization. Please be aware that Kelli and Sue are aware and will be tracking these changes in time, effort, and accuracy as we move closer to the next contract negotiations. You can help by insuring accurate documentation of the following: Admission, discharge, recertification, resumption of care; Or any other visits that require excess time. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Thank You,  
Susan Lanis, RN  
Kelli Zambetti, RN

### What Does the Union Mean to Me?

When I worked at Virtua Marlton a little less than 20 years ago, to me the union meant virtually nothing. Since I was only there a short time, I didn't think about it or what unions in general actually do. When I was hired at Memorial 9 years ago, I felt the same way, despite my coworkers mentioning it often. My opinion started to change the first time a new contract negotiation rolled around. I was honestly afraid of a strike. My coworkers urged me to go to the meetings surrounding the negotiations, so I did. I was impressed by the dynamic and tough leader who was fighting for all of us. In the end, there was no strike and we got a decent contract.

In 2015 I was asked to attend a rally sponsored by HPAE. I happily hopped on a bus to Trenton with my coworkers. The rally was huge, attended by locals around the state holding signs and slogans supporting safe staffing ratios. After the rally, we met with lawmakers to ask for their support. There is no doubt in my mind that experience put me on a path to the politically active person I am today.

About a year or two later, a friend asked me to be a rep. I had always taken a hard pass to becoming a rep since I'm not a fan of confrontation. She persisted, I relented. I attended new rep training and learned so much, but I think the most important thing I learned was the union has my back. This is important to me. Since I still feel kind of new, I have lots of questions, but I am certain I can ask anyone anything and not feel foolish for asking. This has given me the confidence to do things I never thought I could do.

Which leads me to joining the union's COPE (Committee on Political Action). A political junkie's dream. Not only did I learn how to sell raffle tickets, but I get to hear what other locals are doing around the state on our monthly conference call. I've made friends and gained knowledge. It's an opportunity I'd never have if it weren't for our union.

I like to think I'm carrying on the traditions of the unions that came before us. The unions that fought hard to give us the weekend, the 40-hour work week and countless other benefits. I'm so glad I got more involved, thanks to someone who believed in me. In this era where it seems unions are under attack, I'm proud to represent our union.

Melody Schantz 3NE Unit Rep and COPE Committee Member