



THE INFORMER

April 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jo Ann Pirro, RN

National Medical Emergency

Thirty-three years ago when I started my career at Huntington Hospital I never would have believed that this would ever happen. I have only said those words once before and that was the night of the Avianca crash in Cove Neck. I didn't think I would ever say it again. It was ALL HANDS ON DECK then as it is now. Unfortunately, this crisis is more dangerous and it will take a great deal of time to resolve.

Over the next several weeks members will be pushed to do more with less to save lives. Is that what we all signed on for? I'm not sure I can answer that question honestly anymore. Everyone's nerves are on edge. Nurses are becoming the single bread winners of their families when family members are laid off and then when they come to work they feel like they are walking into a war zone. But we can get through this. We need to be flexible and supportive of each other. Think out of the box; share your ideas. You just might think of something that people in the Command Center haven't. I expect people to be scared. Hell, I break out into hives every day listening to Governor Cuomo.

In some areas members who regularly work ten hours shifts are being asked to volunteer to work twelve hour shifts to provide continuity of care when asked to help out on other units and to decrease their exposure by working three days rather than four.

For members who anticipate needing childcare, Bright Horizons, a backup babysitting agency, is in partnership with Northwell. You can find more information on <https://backupbrighthorizons.com..> Please speak with them if you are having any issues. I've been told that some of their services can be free, depending on your circumstances and that there is a possibility of using a family member who would be paid by Blue Horizon. Also, Northwell has partnered with the YMCA in Huntington and Bayshore to offer childcare to the children of first responders. Please call them for pricing.

Everyone should sign up for text messaging from Huntington's Command Center: text NWCV to 333-111. You can also call the Command Center at 631-351-2400 with ANY questions you have. There's also a What's New and Frequently Asked Questions on Northwell's preparedness website: www.northwell.edu/employees/coronavirus-preparedness-information.

April's Quarterly meetings are cancelled. Hopefully, we'll be able to meet in July. Until then, please send me texts or emails through the website which I will answer as soon as I can and, above all, be safe.

New Board Member Intro

by Heather Hemingway, RN, BSN – Second VP

When I graduated from Fairfield University in 1994 it was extremely difficult to obtain a job in a hospital; there were plenty of nurses and few jobs. I began my career as a charge nurse at a skilled nursing facility in Connecticut. When I relocated to Long Island in 1996 I was hired by Janet Milanese and began my career in Huntington Hospital on 5 East. In 1998 I was fortunate enough to be accepted into a will-train position for the ICU and have remained there ever since.

Over the past few years I have been involved as a unit representative and was honored when I was asked to sit in on the last union negotiations. Many say two of my best attributes as a nurse are my devotion to patients and dedication to nurse advocacy. Upon accepting the position of Second VP in January I never anticipated that a historical pandemic would be unfolding. I could not be more impressed with the tireless commitment of the Board working with Administration on how best to navigate these uncharted territories. We are all working together to keep HHNA union members safe and provide care to the community in these uncertain times.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication. You are all AMAZING and the team we have at Huntington Hospital is ONE OF A KIND!

What I know is that it's going to be better. If it's bad, it might get worse, but I know that it's going to be better. And you have to know that. There's a country song out now that I wish I'd written, that says, "Every storm runs out of rain."

~ Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014) poet, memoirist, activist

You know you're a nurse if

- you don't know what to wear when you're not in scrubs.**
- napping is your preferred day off activity.**
- a graduate is your back-up cup.**
- summer means fresh first year residents.**
- Mars is not a planet to you, but a medication administration reference sheet.**
- you use bandage scissors to clip coupons.**
- you suggest which meds and tests you need when you visit your health care provider.**
- you mentally assess your friends.**
- you yell out diagnoses when watching medical dramas on TV.**
- you believe experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.**

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

by Jane Hubert, RN – Treasurer

We are in the midst of a coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 is unique in many ways and we are all learning more each day. The more vulnerable populations are patients over 60 and/or those with pre-existing conditions. Our hospital and other hospitals in the Northwell system have treated patients who have tested positive for this virus. HHNA and the administration of Huntington Hospital have met and continue to have ongoing discussions regarding this outbreak. Additionally, the hospital is taking the following steps to get up-to-date information to all employees: Infection Control and Administration at Huntington are currently holding weekly town hall style meetings to keep staff informed, employees are receiving frequent e-mail updates, the hospital has opened its Incident Command Center to deal with this situation, Northwell has established a texting system to provide updates, there is a section of the Intranet that is dedicated to the current pandemic.

The hospital has the capability of testing for coronavirus, but does need to meet certain Infection Control and DOH criteria for the testing of patients. All patients suspected of being infected will be tested with a respiratory panel and have a chest x-ray done. When treating a patient with a positive coronavirus test personal protective equipment, including the N-95 mask, with strict isolation in available negative pressure rooms or hepa filter rooms is utilized. There is a logbook for patients who are positive in which the names of all staff and visitors entering the patient's room are recorded.

Northwell has been preparing for the likely event that more staff will be needed by inquiring about agencies to supplement staff and changes in new hire orientation programs concentrating more on clinical orientation. There is currently a ban on student nurses from working in the ED. The hospital has also stopped volunteers from working in the hospital. Northwell is also planning for the likely need for more critical care beds. The hospital is currently experiencing many holds in the ED requiring the utilization of areas such as ASU to hold patients waiting for beds

In addition, the following measures are being utilized: there are very few exceptions to the rule of no patient visiting, all employees are required to wear surgical masks, when possible, the hospital is attempting to avoid the use of nebulizers by switching patients to metered dose inhalers, there is a hold on meetings of more than ten people, there are restrictions on business travel and staff travelling to certain specified areas for personal reasons will have to contact Employee Health before returning to work.

By the time you read this article there will probably be many more changes to our practice. Please use your best judgement to protect yourself, your patients, your coworkers, your family and members of the community. Follow policy on wearing PPE and on donning and doffing PPE to protect yourself and others.

While it is not policy for administration to ask why you need to use sick days we ask you to tell administration if you need sick time because you are concerned that you or a family member has coronavirus. In the event that quarantine is recommended, please contact us at HHNA so we may assist you in any way. If we have any updates that need to be provided to staff, we will send out a robocall. As always, please contact us with any questions via e-mail at hhnanurses.org or phone at 631-757-5206.

Stay Informed and Involved

by Joan Aliperti, RN – Secretary

Keeping members informed is one of the basic elements necessary for building and maintaining strong and effective unions. Communication with the union membership remains key to having an effective Union. A newsletter helps keep the membership informed, but it cannot substitute for regular meetings. However, at this time the newsletter, emails, robo calls, etc. have to take the place of our April quarterly meeting. Hopefully, the quarterly meetings scheduled for the second Tuesday of July and October at the hospital will take place as scheduled.

These meetings are conducted by the union Board four times a day with the hopes of catching as many nurses as possible throughout the day. We update members on arbitrations and grievances and members are able to bring questions and concerns they are having on their units to the Board.

Members must be fully informed of what's going on in their workplace, their union, and the larger community. One way of doing this is to join committees. When this crisis is over you will find there are a variety of committees to choose from. Find one you are interested in and start participating. You will meet other employees in the hospital and learn what's going on behind the scenes. The Council on Nursing Practice is a great committee that meets on the first Thursday of every month and any nurse can attend; night shift participation is greatly needed for this committee. The Council discusses issues that arise which affect the union and the hospital.

Get involved, stay informed and maintain a strong members' participation. Without it, we'll have an apathetic membership that knows little, and cares less about the union.

MEDICAL DICTIONARY FOR HEALTH CARE

BUNGEE JUMPER	a patient who pulls on his catheter tube
FREUD SQUADpsychiatrists
GUTS AND BUTTS	general surgery
INBREDSnurses and doctors whose parents are also nurses and doctors
Q-TIPa white haired elderly person
REAR ADMIRAL	a proctologist

Unfortunately

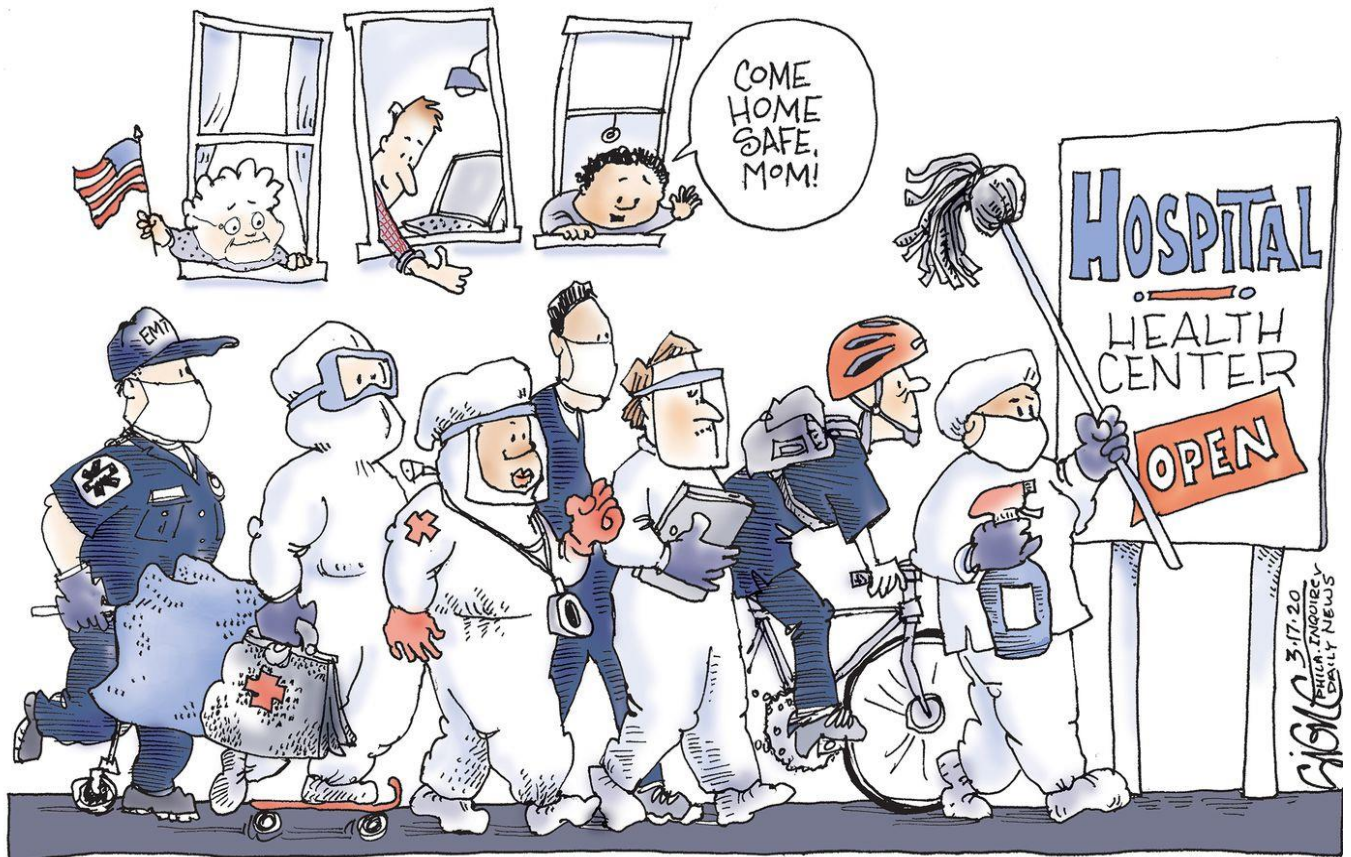
by Lisa Quintero, RN – First VP

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in unprecedented times. Our active work force has never experienced any such emergency as COVID-19. As you are aware, the President of the United States has declared a national state of emergency. These times are shocking to us all and are the times we all need to work together and realize that other nursing units may be experiencing different issues than yours. As union members we must stick together and support one another. We all need to remember that this is a national emergency and we must be amenable to what the HHNA and the hospital may ask of us.

We nurses are the front line of defense in caring for these sick patients when we know so little about this virus. We do this while still

having to care for the other acutely ill patients in the hospital. We must all be diligent in our safe practices. Adhering to the proper procedures for the use of PPE has never been more important. You MUST keep yourself safe! I know there have been many questions regarding the use of the N95 masks. The hospital is following the CDC guidelines, as well as, the guidelines from 3M, the manufacturer of the N95 mask.

The hospital has many resources available for your questions. The Command center is available for your concerns and even your ideas. Check your email for regular updates and I encourage you to sign up for the txt message service specifically for COVID-19 updates.



OUR TROOPS REPORTING to the FRONT LINES!

Editorial by Marion Catanzaro, RN

A few weeks ago when the government was saying the death rate from coronavirus would be less than a fraction of 1% and were downplaying the need for testing a California nurse stepped forward. She had been placed in quarantine after exhibiting coronavirus symptoms, including an elevated temperature, but she was refused testing. Through her union the nurse said she was told they wouldn't test her because if she was wearing the recommended PPE, she wouldn't have the coronavirus. The union asked, "What kind of science based evidence is that?"

Nurses, airline attendants and teachers turned to their unions to set the country straight about the reality of the situation as they were experiencing it on the front line. If not for unions, we wouldn't know a lot of the story. A union worker's confidence and willingness to speak up comes from the protection of their union. Most people in the country don't have union protection, but find themselves better informed because of unions. Unions are also demanding safety protocols and negotiating for relief packages that will affect all workers.

The HHNA Board has been meeting with management to develop strategies that create as safe an environment as possible for its members while treating infected patients. Meetings will continue and you will be informed of any changes.

GIVE A HOOT !



SUPPORT YOUR UNION !

Visit the HHNA website at HHNA Nurses.org

A NURSE'S PRAYER

Let me dedicate my life today
in the care of those who come my way.

Let me touch each one
with healing hand
and the gentle art for which
I stand.

And then tonight when
the day is done,
let me rest in peace
if I've helped just one.