



# THE INFORMER

April 2015  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
by Pat Mills, RN

## Big Decisions to Come

Our contract expires on September 30th of this year and your Board of Directors needs to know what is important to each member as we prepare for negotiations.

On the next page is a list of items the Board has put together based on what we hear members speaking about at our quarterly meetings and at any other time we speak with members. It is a list of possible proposals for negotiations. Using the numbers 1 ( the most important ) through 10 ( the least important ) please take the time to evaluate this list and return it with your choices to your Board as soon as possible.

All of the items on the list are financially based. The union also negotiates on your behalf for non-financial benefits and working conditions. Please keep this in mind when you fill out the additional comments area with other items you wish to be considered.

Please be sure to put your name on the paper and return it to the HHNA mailbox in the Nursing Office or mail directly to HHNA @ PO Box 937, Huntington, N.Y., 11743. All items will be tallied and the completed list will be used to decide upon our final contract proposals. Lists without names will NOT be considered.

Several years ago we amended our By-Laws to include language mandating attendance at Quarterly membership meetings as a requirement to voting on union matters. These are as follows: full time members and part time members must attend two meetings a year, per diem members must attend one meeting a year, new hires or members on a leave of absence will be evaluated by their dates of hire or LOA.

We still have two more Quarterly meetings before September; one is on April 14<sup>th</sup> and the other is on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, everyone has time to fulfill their attendance obligation regarding voting.

### Dates to Remember:

**4/14** *Quarterly meetings*

**4/27** *Arbitration*

**5/7** *Council on Nursing Practice 12n/4N*

**6/4** *Council on Nursing Practice 12n/4N*

**6/8** *Arbitration*

**7/14** *Quarterly meetings*

Print your Name & Unit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Increase Charge pay

\_\_\_ Nurse-Patient Ratio

\_\_\_ Increase On-call pay

\_\_\_ Delete 5% per year penalty past age 62 if retirement occurs prior to age 62

\_\_\_ Increase Base Pay

\_\_\_ Increase Longevity Pay

\_\_\_ Increase Health Insurance Stipend to retirees from \$2500/year

\_\_\_ Improve pay out for unused sick time

\_\_\_ Decrease contribution cost of Medical Insurance for Part timers

\_\_\_ Increase Tuition reimbursement

Additional comments:

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# Bullying in Nursing

by Jane Hubert, RN - Second VP

Nursing is considered a profession involved in healing, however, there are times when the behavior of some in the nursing profession can be harmful. Bullying among nurses is an unfortunate behavior present in our profession.

Bullying is defined as one person acting against another person in a verbally, emotionally, or physically abusive way. The abusive behavior can involve threats, humiliation, intimidation and interference or sabotage resulting in possible harm to the care of a patient. Most bullying is never recognized, documented or reported. Some nurses may not report bullying for fear of retaliation; other nurses may just choose to leave a hostile environment rather than report the bullying.

There are many behaviors that are associated with bullying. Bullying can be subtle or blatant and can be inflicted by coworkers, managers or supervisors. Some of these behaviors are inappropriate comments or jokes, eye rolling, cursing, shouting, verbal abuse, constant criticism or harassment, withholding needed information about a patient or work assignment, denying promotions or vacations and assigning tasks or unfair assignments in order to set someone up for failure.

Bullying can have many effects. It can cause physical, psychological and financial problems for the victim and can ultimately lead to adverse outcomes for patients.

Acknowledgement of the presence of bullying is the first step in responding to bullying. Facilities should have a written policy in place concerning bullying including a zero tolerance policy. Any incidence of bullying should be considered a serious and urgent issue and should be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner. The Joint Commission includes a regulation regarding bullying which took effect in January 2009 with the recommendation of enforcement of a Zero tolerance policy.

At Huntington Hospital there have been many conversations between HHNA and Nursing Administration about the issue of bullying. Management does investigate situations brought to their attention and has disciplined union employees and members of Nursing Management appropriately.

If you feel that you or a coworker are the victim of bullying, please call the HHNA at 631-757-5206 or send us an e-mail via our website, [hhnanurses.org](http://hhnanurses.org), to report and discuss the circumstances. You can also report any incidents to the Employee Assistance Program or Donna Anguilo (Corporate Compliance) at 351-4171. NSLIJ also has a 24/7 Compliance helpline at 1-800-894-3226.

Engaging in bullying behavior violates the expectations of professional work relations. **Bullying cannot and must not be tolerated.**

## OVERTIME

by Lisa Quintero, RN – First VP

Once again we must address the issue of overtime because nurses are still being denied their entitled overtime.

As stated in your union contract, overtime will be paid with prior authorization from nursing administration. If you're approaching the end of your shift and will not be able to complete your work, inform your NM, ANM or charge nurse of your situation so she/he may inform supervision. If your NM, ANM or charge nurse is unwilling to call supervision, you must call supervision yourself. In the instance of a missed unpaid, duty-free meal period, inform supervision as soon as you realize you won't be able to take your mealtime; administration must be given the opportunity to find a solution. Eating lunch/dinner in fifteen minutes or while charting is not a solution. In addition, all RN's who are **required** to attend meetings during non-working hours will be paid for attendance at their overtime rate. Fill out and submit the yellow overtime authorization form whenever you deserve to be paid at the overtime rate. Despite following these rules some nurses have either been denied overtime pay or the supervisor on duty will not accept the overtime form. If this happens, please note the name of the supervisor on the form, note their denial and send a copy to the union.

(continued on the next page)

We have rules in our collective bargaining agreement that state our entitlement to overtime. Our time is valuable. We should not be forced to work for nothing and that is exactly what administration is forcing us to do when they deny overtime. Our jobs are extremely difficult on the best of days and nursing is becoming more complex every day. When we are unable to complete our jobs in the allocated time, we deserve to be compensated.

**Don't let administration bully you!**

## **Union Representation at Investigatory Meetings with Management**

by Jo Ann Pirro, RN – Treasurer

How many times have you either heard a Board Member say the following or read the following in "The Informer": If you are asked by a supervisor, manager or a director to have a meeting with her/him, ask, "Can this lead to discipline?" Many members would say, "Too many times." However, we still have members not asking the question or refusing union representation when management suggests that the nurse have a representative at a meeting.

What members tell us is they don't ask for representation because they believe they haven't done anything wrong, but management is not always of the same opinion and by the end of the meeting the nurse is being disciplined. You also have the right to a reasonable period of time to consult with the union. Usually you are given until 10:00am the next day. Interviews should be conducted during normal work hours, but, if you are asked to come in on your day off or stay after work, you will get paid at the overtime rate.

It is your legal right to have representation from your union at a meeting with management. The right to representation is called Weingarten Rights which is derived from a 1975 United States Supreme Court case: National Labor Relations Board vs. J. Weingarten. It upheld a NLRB

decision that employees have a right to union representation at investigatory interviews. The Supreme Court decided that the following rules apply;

- The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.
- After the employee makes the request the hospital must choose between three options;
  - Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and (prior to the interview continuing) the representative has a chance to consult privately with the employee.
  - Deny the request and end the interview immediately.
  - Give the employee a clear choice between having the interview without representation or ending the interview.
- If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.

Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better.

~ Florence Nightingale

**Correction to information in the January 2015 newsletter** – Only full time employees who choose to opt out of the hospital's group health insurance plan are eligible for a payout.

# **FYI**

by Joan Aliperti, RN – Secretary

## Time-keepers

Because there have been many problems calculating our members' salaries due to the many factors affecting our pay: time of shift, length of shift, differentials, call pay, OT, etc., the hospital has assigned non-union clerical personnel to handle these problems as they arise. Time-keepers oversee their own set of units which allows them to become familiar with the issues inherent to the units they cover. Following are their names and the units they supervise:

- Cheri Baile - Nursery, ICU, SSDU, 5 North, 1 North, Endo, ASU
- Ann Conetta-Tar - CCU, CICU, Interventional Radiology, IV, Infection Control
- Lumi Hazelton - Hemodialysis, Maternity, Cath Lab, EPS, Midwife, Antepartum, 2 SouthWest, 3 East, 3 North, Resource Team, Infusion
- Patricia Duncan - L&D, Peds, 5 South, 5 East, 2 North, 2 South
- Anel Vargas - PACU, OR, ED, ED Thruput

If you have a payroll question, please contact your time-keeper via email.

## Vacation Reminder

All vacation request forms for the period between June 15<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup> must be presented to your Nurse Manager by April 15<sup>th</sup> and you should receive an answer by May 1<sup>st</sup>

## Cafeteria Conversations

HHNA Board members will be available to speak with union members on the second Wednesday of every month from 11 am to 2 pm in the cafeteria. Last month was the first time "Cafeteria conversations" was held. Many members did stop by with questions. Please join us if you would like to share anything with us.

## Vacant Position Qualifications....Do you have them?

Postings for vacant positions are put on the bulletin board located outside the cafeteria. If you see a posting you are interested in it is important to make sure that you have the requisite qualifications for the position. Recently a position was awarded to an employee who did not have the necessary experience. This member was expecting to start her position in a few weeks and unfortunately the position was taken away and had to be reposted. If you do apply for a position and you don't possess the necessary qualifications, be aware of the fact that this could also happen to you. If you have the opportunity to get cross-trained in an area that interests you, try to work that out with your manager so when a position opens you will have the necessary qualifications.

## License Renewal

You must renew your license by the last day of the month before your birthday. You can't work if you haven't submitted your new license to HH at least a month before the old license expires. An email confirmation is not acceptable as per JCAHO regulations.

**You know you're a nurse if . . . .**

**you believe a good tape job will fix anything.**

**you've ever jumped out of bed in the middle of the night thinking you hear bells ringing.**

**you know the smell of different body fluids and can identify them.**

**you know that every day you will touch a life or a life will touch yours.**

# **PREP FOR NEGOTIATIONS!**

by David A. Davis - HHNA General Counsel

Here we go again! HHNA's contract expires on September 30, 2015. As the Executive Board prepares for negotiations the membership must do the same. The following are some of the things all members should be doing to prepare.

1. **PROPOSALS:** Complete and submit the proposal checklist to HHNA. Whether it is raises, pension, health care or another item, knowing how the membership prioritizes issues helps prioritize our discussions with the Hospital.
2. **SAVE:** While this is always good advice, the threat of a potential strike or lockout is a realistic concern in any round of bargaining. This is an action of last resort which no one takes lightly. Saving money to pay your bills in the event of a strike serves two purposes. First, should that unfortunate event occur, you will be able to fall back on that nest egg. Second, one way to avoid a strike is to be ready for one - the more prepared the membership is, and thus the more seriously the Hospital considers the possibility of a strike, the more likely it is to be reasonable and settle the contract to avoid a strike. Conversely, unions not prepared for a strike have a much more difficult time getting unreasonable employers to make fair and reasonable settlement offers.
3. **MEETINGS:** Attending HHNA meetings is also always good advice. As the contract expiration draws near this is where you will get the latest information, have questions answered, volunteer to help and provide any constructive information. Please keep in mind that we generally engage in "package bargaining" which means there is no deal on anything until there is a deal on everything. Therefore, sometimes things we thought were resolved change. Also, typically the final package isn't put together until the very end (with a strike deadline looming!). As a result, since the whole membership can't be waiting outside of the negotiation room at midnight to approve the deal or declare a strike, we will hold a strike meeting in advance for the membership to authorize the HHNA Board to decide if declaring a strike is necessary. Please attend!

## **Editorial** by Marion Catanzaro, RN

The definition of the word interrogate in The American Heritage Dictionary is to examine by formal questioning. Anytime you have a formal meeting with management for the purpose of, "fact finding, gathering information, getting to the bottom of a situation, finding out what really happened, etc.", you are being interrogated and should have a Board member present. Would you submit to being interrogated by the police without having a lawyer present? I hope not.

The right to union representation at meetings is the most significant right your collective bargaining agreement gives you. Sure, the monetary benefits are important, but those disappear when you lose your job and it's not easy to get a job after you've been fired. As mentioned by Jo Ann in her article, members refuse representation because they believe they aren't guilty of anything and, therefore, are immune from any punishment. Members might also be embarrassed to ask for representation and think if they ask they'll appear guilty.

There are no negatives to having union representation, only positives. If it is determined you are innocent of any wrongdoing, that's great, but, if management believes you are guilty, the union will be there to support you and to ensure that you are treated fairly. It is always better for the union to be involved with a situation from the outset rather than becoming involved after accusations have been made and consequences have been determined. The union will assist you in gathering information and will be by your side if a grievance is filed on your behalf.

You pay dues for this entitlement. Don't toss it aside.

# HHNA Quarterly Meetings



**Tuesday, April 14, 2015**

**The location for all the meetings will be in room G121 (on the ground floor near the linen room)**

**7:30am**

**12:00pm and 1:00pm**

**7:30pm**

**Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner will be available**

Please remember: in order to be a member in good standing, FT/PT employees must attend 2 quarterly meetings a year. Per Diems must attend 1 quarterly meeting a year.

**Visit the HHNA website at [hhnanurses.org](http://hhnanurses.org)**