

# Don't forget the Quarterly meetings on July 9th

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# THE INFORMER

July 2013

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Pat Mills, RN

### Let Your Voice Count by Casting Your Vote

On December 16, 2012 our payroll changed to the NSLIJ system and we began to have pay statements available *only* electronically through the Employee Self Service web site.

We have filed a grievance because hospital administration proposed this change during negotiations and then withdrew their proposal. Therefore, we believe they did not have the right to make this change without negotiating the issue with the union.

Since members of the Board have heard many positive and negative comments regarding this development, we have decided that you can make the final decision. Should we continue with the grievance or should we accept these electronic payroll statements?

With the cost of everything increasing over the past few years we will propose a dues increase of \$3.00 a month for all members at the quarterly meetings in July. This may seem like a lot, but our organization is also facing increased costs. The HHNA provides you with representation 24/7 including an attorney who is on retainer and available at all times. Our attorneys are present at all negotiation sessions and arbitrations. This is a service other organizations, such as, NYSNA, NYSUT and NYPNU do not provide, but one we believe is important because we want our interests covered at all times. We provide more individualized representation in a timely manner.

Monthly dues for NYSNA, NYSUT and NYPNU are approximately \$90.00; monthly HHNA dues with the increase will be \$35.00 for full and part timers and \$25.00 for per diems. In addition, although this will not affect you directly, we ask that you also approve an increase of the Initiation Fee to \$250.00 for new members. These increases will support our Strike Fund and keep the HHNA financially sound.

This article is an official notice of the proposals and the voting schedule as required by our union By-Laws. Please come and vote on all three items at the next quarterly meetings on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Dates to Remember:***

|                    |  |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| <b><i>7/9</i></b>  | <b><i>Quarterly meetings</i></b>           | <b><i>10/3</i></b> | <b><i>Council on Nursing Practice*</i></b> |
| <b><i>9/5</i></b>  | <b><i>Council on Nursing Practice*</i></b> | <b><i>10/8</i></b> | <b><i>Quarterly meetings</i></b>           |
| <b><i>9/10</i></b> | <b><i>Unit Representative dinner</i></b>   | <b><i>11/7</i></b> | <b><i>Council on Nursing Practice*</i></b> |

***\* Council meetings begin at noon in the One South Conference Room***

# WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

by Lisa Quintero, RN – First VP

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled with the national Labor Relations Board establishing the “Weingarten Rights.” These Weingarten rights apply to all union members covered under the National Labor Relations Act.

Weingarten rights are simple, but very important to know and understand so members can protect themselves. These rights guarantee an employee the entitlement of union representation during an investigatory interview. This type of interview is one during which a supervisor or manager questions an employee and which may lead to disciplinary action. If your manager asks to speak with you and you suspect something is wrong, it is important to first ask if the discussion could possibly lead to any type of discipline. If your manager says it may, **you must ask for union representation.** Please be aware that your manager is under no obligation to offer this right to you; **it is your responsibility to ask.** You do not have to answer any questions until representation is available. You have until 10am the following day to secure representation and meet with management if representation is not immediately available on site. You cannot be punished for making this request. It is illegal for management to try and force you to answer any questions after you have asked for representation. It is our experience that management at Huntington Hospital has never refused an employee union representation when it has been requested. However, if management were to deny your request, you would have to end the interview immediately by leaving the room.

Since HH is now fully integrated into NSLIJ, some of the hospital’s newer management personnel may not be familiar with the entitlements of a collective bargaining agreement. Be sure to let your managers know you have protected rights under the union contract if they say you do not need representation during an interview. Please don’t allow yourselves to be put in this type of a situation; if you are ever unsure, contact any Board Member for assistance.

## UNION MEMBERSHIP by Jane Hubert, RN - Second VP

Union membership gives workers the power to negotiate for salary, benefits and favorable working conditions through the process of collective bargaining. Benefits negotiated by a union include differentials, health coverage, pension and retiree benefits. Union workers benefit from higher wages and better benefits than non-union workers in their geographical area. Being a union member offers the support of the union when issues arise in the workplace that may require union representation: any disciplinary action, all contract violations.

Lines of communication between the

union and management are changing as HH is integrated into the NSLIJ system and information regarding our members is not as easily obtained as it was in the past. It is vital that the lines of communication remain open between the union and its members. In order to ensure communication please keep the HHNA informed of any change in address, phone number, e-mail, position, shift, LOA, status (full time, part time or per diem), etc.

The HHNA wants to keep our members informed of all issues that may affect them. Thank you for your continued support.



(Joan Aliperti, Jane Hubert, Pat Mills, Lisa Quintero, Pat Smerz)

## Safe Staffing, Safe Patient Handling Rally at State Capital A Day of Action!

by Joan Aliperti, RN - Secretary

On May 21<sup>st</sup> four HHNA Board Members and one other HHNA member traveled to Albany in support of the Safe Staffing, Safe Patient Handling rally. The rally was an effort to have legislation passed this year for safe nurse-to-patient ratios. The day began with several speakers, including senators who support the bill and various union leaders. The rally took place in the square directly across the street from the

Capital building. It was filled with excitement and lots of energy. We then marched to the Convention Center, also known as "The Egg". While there, we enjoyed lunch and heard more speakers who provided facts obtained from research done on improved staffing levels. These facts included:

- Hospitals that routinely staff with a 1:8 ratio have 5 additional deaths per 1000 patients than those with a 1:4 ratio.
- The odds of patient death increase by 7% for each additional patient the nurse must care for at one time.
- When staffing is increased by only 5% the number of adverse events such as pressure ulcers, catheter associated UTI's, patient injuries, etc, are reduced by 15.8%.
- After ratios were improved in California, the hospitals' incomes also improved.

After lunch the group separated and everyone who attended met with their area's representative. We met with Senator John Flanagan in his office and we were able to voice our concerns and ask for his support in passing this bill. While he did not give us his decision either way, he said he would review the facts we presented to him and make an informed decision.

Before this important bill is voted on you can still have your voice heard. Email Senator Flanagan at [flanagan@NYsenate.gov](mailto:flanagan@NYsenate.gov). Since only a few of our members took the day to attend the rally, it would be in your and your patient's best interest to take a few minutes and send an email.

The union received information concerning this rally after the last quarterly meeting, so it couldn't be presented to members at that time. However, we did post unit based information urging members to participate. Large numbers of people attending any rally does not insure an outcome, but every attendee at this rally represented a vote and that can only help. The weather forecast called for rain, but the sun was shining brightly on all who attended that day.

The most important practical lesson that can be given to nurses is to teach them what to observe.

~ Florence Nightingale

## **Medical Leave of Absence and Disability**

by Jo Ann Pirro, RN - Treasurer

The application procedure for a medical leave of absence and NY State disability is different now than it was in the past at Huntington Hospital.

When applying for a medical LOA you notify our Nursing Office with a note from your doctor. That note is then faxed to 631-351-2214 and you must call the Call Center at NSLIJ at 516-734-7000. NSLIJ will notify The Hartford, which is the insurance company NSLIJ uses regarding leaves of absence and disability applications. When you contact the Call Center you will be given the name of a representative who you must contact and who will start your paperwork by sending you a packet to complete. In the packet you will find forms for you, your doctor and NSLIJ to fill out. NSLIJ will not fill out their part until you and your MD have filled out your parts. You fax the completed forms (yours and your doctor's) back to NSLIJ; they will fill out their part, mail it or fax it back to you and you fax the entire packet to The Hartford. Your nurse manager and/or your supervisor must be notified of your application and be given updates on a monthly basis while you are out on a leave. Following these steps will get the ball rolling. Medical leave time counts toward your Family and Medical Leave Act time for the year.

There is no nurse at Huntington who has NSLIJ's short term or long term disability insurance which is run by The Hartford, however, The Hartford also handles NY State disability for the NSLIJ system so you have to notify them if you are applying for NY State disability. They can be reached at 866-458-1002. The Hartford will then send you a Certification of Health Care Provider Employee's Serious Health Condition Form which must be filled out by your MD within 15 days of receipt. If your MD is slow in doing this you will get a letter stating the date they are closing your claim. It is made very clear that it is your responsibility to make sure that your MD gets this paperwork to them on time.

Please Note: If you get a letter from The Hartford stating you are approved for your LOA for certain dates, you should call the insurance company and make sure it is the disability part of The Hartford application you are getting approved for and not just the FMLA part because you could be approved for more FMLA time and not approved for disability time. This will affect your payments from NY State disability.

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

**you've used the word "rationale", the phrase "as evidenced by" or quoted a nursing diagnosis in everyday life.**

**you leave your work shoes in the garage.**

**you sign your credit card slip at the grocery store with "RN" at the end.**

**mars is not a planet to you; it is a Medication Administration Record sheet.**

**you catch yourself counting pills after you take one out of a container at home.**

# HHNA Quarterly Meetings

**Tuesday, July 9, 2013**

**Meetings will be held at the following times and place:**

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| <b>7:30 am</b> | <b>1 South</b> |
| <b>12 noon</b> | <b>1 South</b> |
| <b>1:00 pm</b> | <b>1 South</b> |
| <b>7:30 pm</b> | <b>1 South</b> |

**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.**