



# THE INFORMER

April 2014  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
by Pat Mills, RN

**Congratulations to all members on our third MAGNET designation. Thanks to everyone for your participation.**

A few months ago we posted the seniority and longevity lists on the HHNA bulletin board by the cafeteria. Members had many questions, so I'll review with you how seniority is calculated:

- For the majority of our members your seniority date is defined as the length of time an RN has been **continually** employed by the hospital
- RN's who were previously LPN's at Huntington Hospital receive 75% credit for their LPN time towards their seniority.
- If you terminate employment at Huntington Hospital for any amount of time your **rehire** date becomes your seniority date.
- You accrue seniority during the first six months of an approved leave of absence and the accrual continues beyond six months if you are paid at the same FTE level paid prior to starting the leave and payment is not made with donated time.
- There is no loss of seniority if you are out on Worker's Compensation and return within one year.
- Full and part-timers accrue seniority at the same rate.
- Per diems don't have posted seniority dates. When per diem employees apply for part-time or full-time positions their seniority date will be calculated at 25% for all years prior to 2008 and for years after 2008 it will be equal to the number of hours worked as a per diem to a maximum of 75% for each year; part-time and full-time employment at HH will be added to the calculation.

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

***4/3 Council on Nursing Practice\****

***4/8 Quarterly meetings***

***5/1 Council on Nursing Practice\****

***6/5 Council on Nursing Practice\****

***6/10 Unit representative meeting 7pm – 1 South***

***7/8 Quarterly meetings***

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

## Current In-House Position Application Guidelines

by Joan Aliperti, RN – Secretary

All union members have the opportunity to apply for any posted position provided they possess the requisite qualifications. The Hospital is required by our contract to post vacancies and newly created positions on the bulletin board outside of the cafeteria. They will be posted until filled or withdrawn.

If no qualified employee applies for a bargaining unit position and the hospital decides to change the qualifications, the position will be reposted with the changed qualifications. The employee will be selected for the new position within 21 days from the date on which the posting is taken down. If more than one employee with equal qualifications applies for the same position, it will be awarded based on bargaining unit seniority.

Once the selection has been made, the nurse should be transferred to the new position within 3 months of selection. This past September there were several nurses who were awarded positions and held in their old positions longer than 3 months to cover the holidays in December. If you are held longer than 3 months, notify the union Board so we can intervene on your behalf. All applicants should be notified of acceptance or rejection within 15 days of the job being awarded. The position will be kept for in-house employees for one week; after that it will be open for other nurses via the website. All applications need to be in writing as directed on the posting. If union members apply via the website, the application will be sent to **Taleo**, which is NSUH-LIJ's online tool for talent acquisition (hiring of new staff), and the in-house benefit is lost.

Employees accepting positions in specialty units such as OR, ED, Endo, EP, L&D, Special procedures, Cath lab, CCU, ICU, SDU, and PACU cannot apply for a transfer for 18 months because of the intense and lengthy orientation. A change of shift is allowed within the unit.

**When a union member chooses to take a management position, her/his benefit and sick time will be paid out and the employee will be changed to the PTO system.**

Additional information regarding the posting of vacancies can be found on page 15 in our contract.

For we who nurse, our nursing is something which, unless we are making progress every year, every month, every week, we are going back. No system shall endure which does not march.  
~ Florence Nightingale

## Vacation Requests

by Jane Hubert, RN – Second VP

When planning your summer vacation you must obtain a Vacation Request form from your Nurse Manager and submit your request by **April 15<sup>th</sup>** for the period of time between June 15<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>. Your NM will let you know if your request was approved or denied by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Vacations will be granted on the basis of bargaining unit seniority and the operating requirements of the individual nursing unit. If members with higher seniority submit their requests after April 15<sup>th</sup>, their requests may not be granted according to seniority.

- **Please refer to page 31 of our Union Contract for further details regarding vacation.**

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

by Lisa Quintero, RN – First VP

Bereavement leave is something you don't ever want to need, but when death touches our lives the ability to grieve and participate in the attendant rituals without being concerned about loss of pay is important. Our contract entitles each nurse to a certain amount of paid bereavement leave at these unfortunate times.

Leave is based on your full time/part time status, whether you work 7.5 hour shifts or participate in the AWSP program which includes 10 and 12 hour shifts, and the nature of your relationship with the deceased.

Full time 7.5 hour employees are entitled to 3 days of paid leave, full time AWSP employees are entitled to 2 days of paid leave and part time 7.5 hour or AWSP employees are entitled to 1 day of paid leave following the notification of death of a: spouse, adult significant other who resides with the employee, biological or adopted child, mother, father, sibling, mother or father-in-law or grandchild.

In addition, all full time employees and part time employees, 7.5 hour and AWSP, are entitled to 1 day of paid leave following the notification of death of a: niece, nephew, first cousin, grandmother, grandfather, sister or brother- in-law, great grandparents, aunt or uncle. However, if this family member had been residing with the employee at the time of their death, full time employees are entitled to 3 days of paid leave and AWSP employees are entitled to 2 days of paid leave; the part time entitlement remains at 1 day of paid leave.

All bereavement leaves will begin within the first 7 days the employee is scheduled to work, unless longer is needed to attend a funeral or memorial, and will be granted upon notification of the death.

## **Unsafe Assignment**

by Jane Hubert, RN – Second VP

We have had contractual language regarding what to do when you are given an assignment that is unsafe and, therefore, potentially harmful to you and/or your patients for many years. We have written about it in the newsletter many times, but members don't follow the necessary steps to remedy the situation, so nothing changes! Imagine the impact if all members followed this simple process instead of just grumbling and jeopardizing their licenses and their patients' care. Think about how you would feel if you were the patient. Patient advocacy is always part of a nurse's assignment.

If you are given an assignment you perceive to be unsafe, you should notify the Nurse Manager (NM), Assistant Nurse Manager (ANM), or designee (Charge Nurse). After assessing the situation, the NM, ANM or Charge Nurse will consult with the employee.

If the employee still feels the situation is unsafe, the NM, ANM or Charge Nurse must notify the Associate Director of Nursing or the Nursing Supervisor on duty who will assess the situation with the employee and the NM, ANM, or Charge Nurse barring an emergency.

If the situation remains unresolved, the Associate Director of Nursing or Nursing Supervisor will report in person to the unit no longer than 1 hour after notification.

If the employee continues to perceive the assignment as unsafe, the employee may present a written account of the situation to the Vice President of Nursing, the Union and the Council on Nursing Practice for review at its next meeting.

# L O N G E V I T Y

by Jo Ann Pirro, RN - Treasurer

Full-time and part-time union members receive full credit for the number of years' experience they have as RN's at Huntington Hospital and for 15 years of comparable experience at any acute care institution for employment 15 years prior to their date of employment at Huntington Hospital; this prior experience allowance is determined by the VP of Nursing. Members receive such longevity effective as of their individual anniversary dates of hire.

Please note that you all have a date of hire, a seniority date and a longevity date and these dates are not always the same. It depends on many factors: were you an LPN at HH before becoming an RN, did you work as a nurse's aid prior to getting your RN, were you out for an extended leave of absence, did you receive a prior experience allowance, did you work full-time/part-time and/or per diem?

- LPN's who became RN's receive 75% credit for the number of years' experience they have as an LPN at Huntington Hospital.
- All other hospital employees who become RN's receive 25% credit for the number of years of their prior service at Huntington Hospital.
- Per diems receive 0.25 FTE for all years worked prior to 2008 and for years after 2008 their entitlement will be equal to the number of hours worked as a per diem to a maximum of 0.75 FTE for each year; any full-time and part-time employment credit will also be included.
- Following is our longevity scale through September 30, 2015. You receive the increase on your longevity date in the listed years. These payments are received in a higher hourly rate and are **not** cumulative. For example, after one year of employment you receive an extra \$2,200 and after two years of employment you receive an extra \$850 (\$3,050 minus \$2,200), etc.

Year 1 - \$2,200	Year 10 - \$10,450	Year 20 - \$19,850
Year 2 - \$3,050	Year 11 - \$10,950	Year 23 - \$20,350
Year 3 - \$3,900	Year 13 - \$11,450	Year 25 - \$24,100
Year 5 - \$5,600	Year 15 - \$15,200	Year 28 - \$24,600
Year 7 - \$7,300	Year 18 - \$15,700	Year 30 - \$30,850
Year 8 - \$7,900		

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

**you stare at someone in utter disbelief when they actually cover their mouth to cough.**

**you show someone your shoes when they ask, "What color is the patient's diarrhea."**

**you can sleep soundly sitting up at the hospital cafeteria table during your meal break and not be embarrassed when you wake up.**

## **Editorials and Opinions**

### **hnanurses.org**

If you haven't been to the union's new website, check it out. There are six links: Home Page, Newsletter, Contract, Postings, Attorneys, Contact Us.

Having the collective bargaining agreement on the website makes it more convenient to look up contractual issues than rummaging through your house and car looking for your copy of the contract.

The union negotiates wages, benefits and working conditions with management every few years and the results are published in the handbook all members receive. Problems that arise between negotiations are discussed by union and management and any results of those discussions that differ from contractual information are presented during quarterly meetings, unit representative meetings and are published in the newsletter. All members don't read the contract, attend every quarterly meeting or read the newsletter and even if they do it's impossible to remember everything, which is why all Board members are never far from a copy of the contract.

If a member isn't aware of her/his contractual

rights and seeks an answer to a question from management, the response will be what that management person thinks is the correct response, but the answer may not be what was previously agreed upon by the union and management. By getting your information from management you may be denying yourself a contractual entitlement.

Through the years there have been times that misinformation received from a management source has kept members from receiving an entitlement for quite some time until the issue was brought to a Board member or just mentioned casually in a Board member's presence. These problems are usually easily rectified because previously agreed upon resolutions are in black and white and cannot be denied.

This is why we urge everyone to read the contract, either the handbook or on the website and notify a Board member if clarification is needed by leaving a message in the union mailbox in the Nursing Office, on the union phone (631-757-5206) or on the union website through the Contact Us link.

### **Member Questions and Opinions**

We'd like to make this newsletter more representative of our members' needs and we can't do that without your input. We will print your comments on a union issue and answers to your questions anonymously, if preferred. If you have a concern, chances are other members are wondering about the same thing. Please send comments and questions on the union website through the Contact Us link.

### **Union Membership Increases**

On March 13, 2014 Newsday printed an article titled "Union membership grows in state" written by James T. Madore in which he stated, "Unions in New York State added 145,000 members last year, the first increase since 2007, new federal data show"; this represents an 8% increase over figures from 2012.

Mr. Madore wrote that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,

when questioned about this increase, said they think workers feel more comfortable about joining a union because the job market has improved. Workers fear losing their jobs more during bad times because finding another job would be very difficult, however, union membership is the best way to bolster job security because union contracts contain rules management must follow during layoffs, job abolishments

and terminations.

State AFL-CIO president, Mario Cilento was also quoted in the article: "The increase in New York's union membership is encouraging not just for the labor movement, but for all who want a stronger middle class in our state. History has shown higher rates of union membership lead to better wages, benefits and conditions of employment for all workers."

**FYI** - Page 8, Section E (1) of our contract states, "The Employer will not float any newly graduated new hires from their assigned unit for a period of six (6) months from the last day of his/her orientation . . . . "newly graduated" shall mean any nurse for whom Huntington Hospital is his/her first nursing position or any nurse who has been an RN for less than one year prior to the first day of employment at Huntington Hospital."

**MEDICATION WORD SEARCH**

Find the following words: Abilify, Clozapine, Depakote Geodon, Keppra, Lamictal, Lithium, Risperdal, Seroquel, Tegretol, Topomax, Trileptal, Zyprexa

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# HHNA Quarterly Meetings

## Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Meetings will be held at the following times and places:

7:30 am	1 South
12 noon	1 South
1:00 pm	1 South
7:30 pm	1 South

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.

