

Danbury Nurses' Union Local 5047

UPDATE 47

AFT Nurses' and Healthcare Professionals, AFTCT AFL-CIO

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2018

Volume 18, Number 2

Message from the President

Happy Spring to everyone and what a wonderful season of change and new beginnings. This is really a time of new life for our Earth and now our Hospital. With change there is always uncertainty and with hope there is less fear. Please join me in having an open mind to these changes and embrace what we can all do to make our world, lives and job as best as we can make them.

There are open forums with Dr. John Murphy this Tuesday at 2pm in the Creasy Auditorium. Please read your work emails and the employee newsletters. There is so much happening now, and everyone needs to do their part to keep up on the communications from the Union and the Hospital. Please continue to do unsafe staffing forms for poor staffing and occurrence reports for Cerner things or pharmacy delays or any other patient safety risk. Remember this is another way to protect our licenses and nurses in general.

Dr. Murphy met with me in his office on Wednesday to discuss the agreement with Health Quest. This was a show of respect for our Union members. The way Dr. Murphy explained this merger to me was that there are 5 entities of WCHN which consists of Danbury Hospital, Norwalk Hospital, New Milford Hospital, Western CT Medical Group and Homecare. The Health Quest group consists of Putnam Hospital, Vassar Hospital, Northern Dutchess Hospital and Sharon Hospital. When these 9 separate areas become one new parent company, the name will be new, and the merger will be complete. This will be occurring over the next 8 to 12 months. 74 communities will be served and there will be job growth, geographic diversity and hopefully better insurance with more access to other facilities. We all have the ability to do great things and we must remain in communication to enhance our journey. Please know the Union is not accepting this merger blindly, and we will be watching closely to protect our members.

The next meeting at the Union office will be on April 17th and at 5pm I have arranged for a speaker to come and talk about DVT prevention and new advances in medicine. All Unit 47 nurses are invited. Please join us for discussion and dinner. RSVP to the Union office at aft5047unit47@gmail.com so we can plan for the meal, and the Bristol Myers company is sponsoring.

The continue to be proud of working beside wonderful and dedicated nurses.

Sincerely,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN



You are Invited!!!

Unit 47 / WCHN
RN Retiree Lunch

Saturday, May 5, 2018

12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Café on the Green

*100 Aunt Hack Road
Danbury, CT 06811*

RNs, RN Retirees and Guests
Celebrate Nurses' Week
with treasured friends

\$25.00 per person

Make out checks to: Danbury Nurses' Union

Please Mail Checks by April 10 to:

*Danbury Nurses' Union
Danbury Executive Tower
30 Main St. Suite 202
Danbury, CT 06810-3006*

Tel. # (203) 748 4774 aft5047unit47@gmail.com

Some personal reflections of what it means to me to be part of Unit 47

I've been a member of our Union for over 34 years, and I want to share with you what it's meant to me and why I still feel strongly about being unionized.

As a new graduate from Norwalk Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1971 we were all sure we were going to get hired to work. There was a five-hundred-dollar sign on bonus if you agreed to work for the hospital for five years (those that stayed that is)! Of course, this wasn't going to help all of us. Times of uncertainty lingered even though it was a step in the right direction. The job market was wide open for nurses and LPN's as well. We learned to be inquisitive and take charge of in our senior year, and so it became natural to advocate for others and the less fortunate.

I spent almost ten years at Norwalk Hospital before marrying and moving into a house from an apartment near the hospital. We commuted on route seven from Brookfield to Norwalk for that time. I left my son with my mother in Wilton along the way so we didn't have to leave him with a stranger or pay for childcare. My parents were delighted they had time with their Grandchild. Shift work was expected at this time. I'd have to work evenings, days and nights within a 4week schedule! My holidays were often a "mixed bag". I'd have part of the holiday, for instance, Thanksgiving Day but be expected to work the next day and the weekend. We did not really have a say in scheduling, the hospital ran the place, we were just "their hires".

Now today if we did not have a contract the hospital would be controlling our schedules and lives again, but we are unionized. The process of negotiating may seem arduous and unfair at times because we have to negotiate and weigh what's good for the majority, and sometimes give up things we have for the greater good of all. We have to stay united in solidarity for the best outcome and speak as one voice. Of course, we find that mutual ground first and call on those who stand up to take a leadership role on our best behalf and support **our Union**.

I was a member of our executive board for a number of years, just before Carol Flynn retired and Mary Consoli became our president. Mary was so enthusiastic about what Carol had mentored her on. We made great accomplishments in our wages and benefits. Contractually we were very sound!

We would not have what we have today if we were not unionized. I have attended conferences and learned more about what makes a good union strong. I highly recommend doing so and being involved in what matters to you. We all are the **UNION**! I point that out because our president is NOT the union, you are. She represents us in a leadership role but each one of us make up our union! Don't say the "union this" or the union that". It should be "we this" and "we that" as a unionized body!

I am presently on a medical LOA and able to get my long-term benefits to make up 100% of my pay. I'm sure I most likely would be asked to leave my job if it weren't for our Union contract language that protects me and allows me six months off before I can be terminated.

In ending, I hope you realize how important you are as the Union. As a good friend and Union supporter said to me: "You can't keep a good woman (or man) down". Empowerment!

In Solidarity,

Terri Hudak RN,BSN (Stepdown Unit)

Hello Fellow Colleagues,

Just a quick note about Compassion Fatigue and Healthy Work Environment (Megan O'Toole it has come to my attention you give a great talk and hope to hear it soon). Nurses experience compassion fatigue, which is a combination of burnout, psychological and physiological responses to prolonged chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors, and secondary traumatic stress (STS), which is health care workers' responses to various exposures to trauma arising from treating patients who have directly experienced traumatic or extremely stressful events. These negative feelings prevent development and maintenance of caring relationships with patients and family members and are experienced by younger nurses and nurses early in their careers. Increasingly, younger nurses are leaving their positions within the first year, creating retention issue (Kelly & Todd 2017). With all the new changes, the existing heavy work load and non cooperation of Mother Nature, a health care worker can feel overwhelmed. Please be kind to yourself, pamper yourself, talk with your co-workers and celebrate each other to create a cohesive work environment. Try to create an optimal work environment for it will be the key to our success!

Respectfully yours,

Michelle Ruvolo RN (Progressive Care Unit)

References

Kelly, L., & Todd, M. (2017). Compassion Fatigue and the Healthy Work Environment. *AACN Advanced Critical Care*, 28(4), p.351-358. doi:10.4037/aacnacc2017283

U and I are the Union

One of the biggest questions we are asked in the union office is, "What has the union done for me?". Unions have been a long part of our national history. They have helped us negotiate for fair pay, safe working conditions, and ensured pension/healthcare/workplace injury benefits. Collective bargaining allows teachers to bargain for smaller class sizes and nurses to hold their facilities liable to provide safe staffing for patients. Think of your union membership much like a gym membership. Dues are paid to a larger group who have the same goals as you. But much like a gym membership, if you don't show up and do the work, you will never become stronger. With that being said, this is your time to stand and deliver. Consider becoming a liaison for your area if your unit is underrepresented. If you have an interest in politics, then consider becoming a legislative delegate. We could even use members who are willing to talk to the techs of the Danbury and New Milford Tech union about the benefits union membership. And what will you get in return? You will find that unity represents strength. If you question the power of unity, then look no further than the 131 members who showed up to the emergency nursing forum with less than 24 hours notice. In doing so, nursing issues were pushed to the forefront and we saw improvements much faster than the pharmacists and physicians experienced during the Cerner rollout. Continue to join us in solidarity as we represent your needs and issues at every collective bargaining table in the network. Alone, one does so little. But together, we can do so much.

Megan O'Toole RN (ICU)

Decades ago while a fairly new RN, I remember having a very challenging elderly woman on our unit with delirium. None of the staff wanted to care for her because her aggressive behavior often led to the nurse being kicked or spit at. One morning her neurologist Dr. Stuart Mushlin caught us doing a game of Rock Paper Scissors to see who would be assigned to her. He shamed us and to this day I remember his words of wisdom "Look beyond the person you see in the bed. Remember she was someone's baby and was loved. She is someone's mother and grandmother. She was a wife.

Every patient has a story and a history and the patient in the bed is not what defines them".

His words are still true as we care for more complex patients with psychosocial problems, mental health challenges and substance abuse. We do have newer pharmacological agents in our toolbox as we care for them. We have the Broset and SAS scores to guide us. But please remember the basic fundamentals of nursing. Provide dignity and compassion to these difficult patients.

Jeannette Schreiber, RN (12 Tower)

Injured at work? Know your rights

Have you been injured at work? First thing you need to do is notify the manager or house manager on. Then you need to fill out an incident report within 24-48 hours and be seen in Employee Health. Remember that when Employee Health is closed, the Emergency Department is our Employee Health. Keep copies of all paperwork.

If deemed your unable to return to work, you will need to get a Worker Comp number from Employee Health. You are allowed to follow up with the Specialist of your choice, within the State of Ct. keep records of any conversation you have concerning the injury, with names, dates and times. Keep track of mileage.

Please contact me, Carol Grant, so I could provide you with a packet, more detailed information and answer questions if there's any.

My contact number is 860-354-8403. I work nights, so please leave a message and I will return your call.

Carol Grant RN (12 Tower)

Concerns about Cameras

The cameras in the hospital that are watching the nursing staff in the medication rooms as well as the nurses/staff (and everyone else) in the hallways, are a concern to many. The Hospital has been using these cameras in investigative meetings and it may be detrimental to the nurse. Things that are viewed on camera still require a story behind that view. Things are not always what they appear to be. Remember to question everything. There are three sides to every story.

The rounding sheets and the restraint documentation are really being focused on, so please be certain that they are done. Do an occurrence report in the computer if something was not able to be done on time. It may be due to poor staffing or another patient that requires your nursing time and you are not able to do the assigned task at the assigned hour. There is not always another person to delegate this task to, and that is when the nurse needs to notify the manager or nursing supervisor to report this. We need to be able to continue to do our jobs and cover ourselves and our license. Remember, we hold the Hospital accountable the same way the hospital holds us accountable.

Please continue to do the caring and professional work as a nurse and communicate concerns in real time.

Sincerely,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN (ICU)

Cerner

Where was the education? Even after extra sessions I felt unprepared and I was. My first day of Cerner I had seven patients and the super user also had seven patients. Needless to say, I stayed late! Unit 47 has been involved arranging the open forum with Sharon Adams and with continued updates. Staff talk and help each other with charting. Finding easier ways to find information, switch screens, record small notes, see previous medications and current meds etc... Perhaps a new function a week with education and how to sheets.

We need time, education and support to properly learn Cerner. Perhaps then our frustrations will subside. Actions speak louder than words.

Maryann Milleville RN (8 BP)

Advanced Directive/Living Wills

Many things have changed with regards to Advanced Directives and Living Wills so I wanted to provide some information that may help your nursing education. Advanced Directives do not need to be notarized, although you must be 18 years old to have one.

Due to CT State law, a pregnant patients Advanced Directive will not be honored. Living Wills can be revoked in any manner. Appointment of health care representatives must be revoked in writing and signed by the individual with 2 witnesses.

The 3 "G"s of Advanced Directives are: Gift, Guide and Goal. No attorney is needed to complete an Advanced Directive and it does not need to be notarized. Make 3 copies and give one to physician, keep another and the other to your family.

There are times when these documents are paramount to relieving decision making and allowing ones wishes to be reality. Please talk to your loved ones and continue to communicate your needs.

Thank you,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN (ICU)

Join us for a Town Hall Meeting

hosted by Dr. Murphy



April 3, 10 am

Perkin Auditorium, Norwalk

April 3, 2 pm

Creasy Auditorium, Danbury

April 5, 4 pm

Duracell Building

April 6, 11 am

Robison, New Milford

A Town Hall recording will be shared with staff

Upcoming Events

DVT Prophylaxis—April 17, 2018

Retiree Luncheon—May 5, 2018

Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47

Update 47 is the official publication of Unit #47

AFT Local 5047 AFT-CT, AFL-CIO

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TOGETHER WE BUILD AND GROW