

# UPDATE 4

AFT Nurses' and Healthcare Professionals, AFTCT AFL-CIO

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## WHAT'S HAPPENED TO NURSING???

I graduated from an excellent three-year (33 months) RN diploma program in 1970 – Hartford Hospital School of Nursing. The amount of clinical time spent in the hospital was staggering. We had rotations in all departments, not just observing or shadowing another RN, but you had a real patient assignment. Medicine, Surgery, OB, Cardiology, ICU, VNA, and Psych, even a rotation in the OR. You learned every surgical instrument and served as a scrub nurse (today, we use surgical techs instead) for simple surgical cases, such as simple appendectomies and gall bladders. There were no laparoscopic surgeries in the late 60's/70's.

For the psych rotation, you actually moved to the institute of your choice. You would choose from either St. Elizabeth Psychiatric Institute (state facility) in Washington D.C. or the Institute of Living (private facility) in Hartford. Both facilities opened in the late 1800's, so some of the buildings (mainly dormitories) were very old.

By your senior year, you had to choose a unit for a charge nurse experience and you as a senior, were the charge nurse on the 11-7 shift for one week of 40 hours. Smart me, thought, "Oh, I've got this, I'll pick OB/ GYN". Nope, I had a fresh C – Section, CODE, thank GOD the patient survived!

We were instructed in the nursing model of Team nursing. Most units, on each shift, had 2 teams, each with a team leader; kind of an assistant charge nurse. The big difference in the 1970's was every staff member had input about the patients' plan of care. We had weekly team conferences, which included the entire staff for that unit, RN's, CNA's, sometimes RT and PT, depending on the patients' diagnoses. What was the advantage?? Everyone was aware of all the patients on that unit, and there was definitely more effective communication amongst staff. We also had LPN's, Licensed Practical Nurses. They could be assigned the less sick patients. RN's WROTE their own care plans then, of course, there is definitely no time for that today. Another big difference, some units utilized a medication RN, that nurse only did the meds for the whole unit, there was no unit dosing then and all meds were stock poured from big bottles into med cups.

When I first started in Danbury in 1979, I started as a staff RN on 3-11, on 9 Tower, using team nursing as our model of care. The patients were not as sick then, and that was probably the most important factor of the time. On 9 Tower, on one side, 9East (3-11), would have 2 RN's, 1 LPN, and 1 CNA. You are probably saying "WOW, how did that work??" The 2 staff members on that side of the hall had 13 patients, (for instance rooms 10 – 18) and we worked as a TEAM. We made rounds together, three times per shift. The first two set of rounds we did together (RN and aide, or RN and LPN). We brought our med carts, linen cart, and our ice, water and juice cart. The RN gave out her 4 pm meds and did her assessment with her aide helping. They turned and changed whoever needed that at this time. Your aide or LPN took the vitals as you moved along down the hall. The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of rounds was about 7:30 pm and patients actually got pm care, washed and were given backrubs!! The 3<sup>rd</sup> set of rounds was later in the evening and except for periods of crisis, was usually done by the aide herself and if help was needed, the RN assisted.

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**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
NOVEMBER 13**



**ELECTION OF OFFICERS 2018  
President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Treasurer**

**5:30am to 10:30am Dunkin Donuts  
across from Henry Abbott Tech school**

**10:30am to 1:30pm Union Office 30 Main Street, Danbury suite 202**

**1:30pm to 5:30pm Mykonos Restaurant  
across from Henry Abbott Tech school**

**12 hours of voting time ends 5:30 pm**

*Unit 47 will be providing food and drink at these places  
Meetings will be in lieu of regular liaison and Ex. Board meetings  
Clinical ladder instructions will be available*

The other BIG difference in most institutions across the nation, is the skills and art of IV THERAPY. I bet most of the staff at our hospital is not aware that we had an all RN IV Team of 25 or more RN's for about 40 years. Having a full IV team, the staff RN's did not do any IV's, hang any blood products, give any IV push meds, or mix and give chemo. The IV Nurses did all of that for the staff. However, you did have to mix all your own IV's and piggybacks, sometimes 10 – 15 per shift. IV pumps were not available yet and you stood at the tubing with your watch and second hand and counted your drops per minute to time your calculated rate.

There is a national certification in IV Therapy that only a few nurses at Danbury maintained over the years. There was 2 of us on the team, myself, being one of the two. In 1989 after multiple cuts, and the beginning of the Multispecialist Department, the IV team was abruptly closed. The hierarchy of management did not realize the value of this highly skilled specialty compared to the financial value of a team. I myself was told by a manager, "A monkey can be trained to place an IV!" Some how the skill level is revolving and turning around again. Modern technology has evolved enough to accommodate this. Ultrasound IV's have enabled the practitioner to go even higher with her skill level. IV Therapy remains an art. Many hospitals have brought back a RN Team of IV specialists. Infection control is now in the limelight, because of length of stay and evidence-based practice. The amount of CLAB-SI's is carefully tracked.

So, WHAT has happened to Nursing??? Patients are sicker, much sicker; technology has changed tremendously and improved, insurance coverage is more expensive and covers less. Care plans are filed in a drawer, pre- printed, because there is no time for RN's to write them anymore. We use computers to chart, which is very time consuming, taking time away from the patient. What else did the nurse give up? Is there any time for REAL nursing care anymore?? Does the nurse and the aide work together anymore? Is there even time for that? Once in a while.... When was the last time, you, as a RN gave real care, bathing your patient and giving a backrub, offered to give your patient a basin and a toothbrush?

A lot of staff nurses, today, sadly, basically, only have time to give meds and chart on their computers. BUT..... you DO need a bachelors degree for this.... What else can you do when you have 6, 7, or maybe 8 or more patients each?? What else can you do, when your unit has 15 to 20 admissions or discharges per shift??

The days of real nursing care are a thing of the past. It has changed and evolved, some things for the better, some things for the worse.

We have been unionized at Danbury Hospital for almost 50 years now. We need more nurses to give better nursing care to our patients. There are some people who do not believe in collective bargaining in health care, well; it is the only tool we have for immediate access to have a voice in this wonderful free country we live in to take care of our sick citizens, young and old.

I am getting ready to retire next year, but I hope the new, younger generation of nurses sees the light and realizes the answer is to get involved as a union member and have a voice, you will be heard!

It is happening all around us... Massachusetts is a perfect example... Get involved with your legislature through your union involvement. This will help protect our patients, your license and our profession. Remember, we as **nurses are the union**, together in solidarity. I need you to be there for me when I get old, will you be there for me if I get sick??

Linda L. Najam RN

### Be Aware of the Frozen Pension :

I had many questions about my frozen Danbury Hospital Pension, so I phoned Cecilia Fitzgerald who was able to shed much light on this pension. For those who received the frozen pension benefit, this was from 2011. The pension amount was based on the amount of yearly income and a letter was mailed to the nurse. Pensions can be taken out at 50% of the full amount at age 55 years. 6 months after age 65, the pension increases by 12% to a cap at age 70 years. This is a great increase because this money is compounded 12% each year, so you will receive 12% on top of the previous year, with that 12% already added. It is very important for each person to phone and find out exactly what is expected. Each circumstance is individualized. Danbury Hospital has Principle Finance Group managing this pension. You can phone them directly at 1 800 547 7754 to ask specific individual questions pertaining to your needs.

If Danbury Hospital decides to terminate this plan, the Hospital would need to give 45 days' notice to each employee. At that time, the employee may choose to transfer pension into an annuity.

This pension will only transfer to a spouse, and not next of kin or children. The spouse cannot be of the same gender due to the Federal law at the time of conception of this plan. The Union did raise this concern to Sharon Adams and the need to change this due to the fact that the laws have changed. Same sex marriage is legal, and the spouse should be entitled to the frozen pension.

Please be aware of your pension and the rules that apply.

Live long and be wealthy,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN

# ♥ Love for Liz ♥

One of our own, ASU/PACU/IR nurse Liz Moore, is currently facing a serious medical issue and will be out of work for an extended period of time.

We will be holding a bake sale on Monday November 12<sup>th</sup> from 7 am to 4 pm in the Robilotti to raise money to help ease the financial burden she and her family will face during this holiday season. We will be accepting donations and/or baked goods to help make our fundraiser successful.

Enter to win one of 3 fabulous gift baskets.

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase at the bake sale table.



Dear Colleagues,

On Monday, November 12th from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the Ambulatory Surgery Unit (ASU) will be holding a bake sale at the Main Lobby/Robilotti Conference Room. Please come and enjoy special baked items prepared by the staff and their friends. Raffle tickets can also be purchased for a chance to win any of several Holiday Baskets. All proceeds will benefit Liz Moore, RN ASU. In my 38 years as a nurse at Danbury Hospital, I have witnessed on many occasions the kindness and assistance we have given our coworkers during times of need. Thank you all for your support and generosity.

Since April 2017, your Unit 47 Leadership has been spending time examining our Nurse's Contract, looking for ways to make improvements in preparation for the 2020 negotiations. I urge everyone to read the "red book" and become familiar with it. Let your voice be heard, email your questions and suggestions to the union office. Remember, we can accomplish big things when we work together!

On a lighter note, I would like to remind you of the upcoming Unit 47 Holiday Party at the Amber Room on Friday, November 30th from 5:30 PM – 10:00 PM. Please come and celebrate our solidarity, enjoy a night of dancing and good food in the company of treasured friends and new acquaintances. Hope to see you there!

Leodie A. Salazar, RNC BSN CPC Vice President for Grievance

#### Mindfulness:

This is a class for CEUs that AFT CT provided for all members. I attended and was so impressed with the instructor Liz and how knowledgeable she was in this process. There were about 25 attendees and this took place in the Rocky Hill office.

The 2 hour class revolved around the action of being aware of breathing and performing the task in through the nose and out with a sigh through the mouth. The awareness of that action alone was done and after a few minutes, the relaxation of the room was palpable. There were exercises and stretching with a purpose that allowed a sense of being aware of each muscle.

We all had a small pad for writing a goal and how we were to accomplish this goal. We then had to get an accountability partner from someone in that room and exchange cell/email information with for follow up. Yes, I now have to complete my goal.

The thing I liked best about this mindfulness class was when we all had to write down things we are grateful for with regards to people we work with, our family and ourselves. After everyone was done we reviewed the post its and it was amazing to get so many different and enlightening responses. We all have things that shape our lives and make us who we are. Let us surround ourselves with people and things that make us be our best selves.

I totally recommend this class to everyone. Please be aware that Rocky Hill offers many seminars like this FREE to our members. Please take advantage of all we can learn. I have asked Liz if she would be willing to do another class in the Danbury area for our nurses. Liz would love to so please if you are interested in something like this, email the union office at [aft5047unit47@gmail.com](mailto:aft5047unit47@gmail.com) and let me know if a Saturday morning or afternoon or an evening would be best. Liz lives in Bethel so she said we can work something out.

Mindfulness is amazing.

Sincerely,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN

#### **Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47**

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TOGETHER WE BUILD AND  
GROW