

Danbury Nurses' Union Local 5047

UPDATE 47

AFT Nurses' and Healthcare Professionals, AFTCT AFL-CIO

January, February, March, April

Volume 20, Number 1

Message from the Union President:

We are in the Spring of 2020. This is a year I will not soon forget. The Covid Pandemic has consumed so much of my life and I wish this was all a nightmare. It has been 42 days since the first confirmed Covid case in CT. 55,462 have been tested, 1689 have tested positive, 1946 are currently hospitalized (up 20 from yesterday) and 1036 have died from Covid 19. I know everyone has been working very hard during this crisis. It is frightening to not have a vaccine for this illness. I really hope the vaccine will be ready ASAP and not 18 months from now as what I have been hearing from reports. As much of what I learn about this virus, the truth is, there is still so many false negatives and the testing remains slow. Please keep in mind, if it looks like a rose and smells like a rose, it probably is a rose. Do not take a negative test as 100% accurate. There have been too many times of 2 and even 3 negatives for Covid and the patient still has symptoms. Then that next test is positive Covid. There have been many positives in this crisis as you can see from the numbers above. Please be safe and continue to practice social distancing and fabulous hand hygiene and PPE wear.

Please continue to take advantage of the many benefits our contract has. Remember page 8 "payback" time. Also, May Sweeps is coming up. Remember to get your vacation time for 2021 in order, this is done by seniority and is one of the benefits the hospital has proposed to not have in the next contract.

As you review the contract, please email the union office the things that you love about our contract. Also, what are things you would like to see improved? Or removed. Since we are going to have another negotiation in Jan/Feb/March for our contract expiration March 31, 2021 we need to be diligent in our planning. Things we thought were so important before, may be altered since this Covid Crisis.

Please keep the Employee Assistance Program in mind too. The confidential number is : 800-962-9841. This is a wonderful program that is a benefit to use for so many things. There is a person to discuss financial concerns, emotional concerns and with this Covid virus, issues are helpful to discuss. Again, this is confidential and safe.

Please let me know if there are things you would like more information on and what your union can do for you. Remember, it is a 2-way street and unions are stronger with member involvement. I am pleased to be your union president. I want to be there for you and assist with contract issues.

Thank you for all you do,

Janice Stauffer RN, BSN

Dear Colleagues,

Lately, there have been some questions regarding Paid Sick Leave (PSL), FMLA, Short Term Disability and Pension. I would like to summarize each for you:

A. Paid Sick Leave (PSL) – CT State Law since January 2012

Each year, an eligible employee is entitled to a Paid Sick Leave. *You may use up to 40 hours of PTO* for any unexpected illness, injury or emergencies for yourself and/or your family.

1. Follow the call out procedure on your unit and tell your manager that you are using PSL.
2. Absence(s) designated as PSL will not count as an occurrence.
3. PSL may be used in 1 hour increments or a full shift to a maximum of 40 hours a year.

The hospital may ask for a doctor's note or documentation for absences of 3 or more consecutive days.

For more details, see the HR Attendance Policy

B. FMLA- Your Job Protection for 16 Weeks

CT FMLA provides an eligible employee up to 16 weeks of unpaid, job- protected leave in a 24-month period. **FEDERAL FMLA** entitles an eligible employee up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period. Both the Federal and CT FMLA will run concurrently, and can be used continuously or intermittently.

1. If leave is for a covered relative, employee can use up to 2 weeks of frozen sick bank and may use available PTO but may elect to reserve up to two (2) weeks of PTO in their bank.
2. If leave is used for employee's own illness, employee applies for Short Term Disability (STD)
3. Employee benefits continue, will only accrue PTO if on paid leave. If leave is unpaid, hospital will bill employee for his portion of the health insurance premium.

Be careful: If you have previously used FMLA within the preceding one or two year period, you may not have 16 weeks of job protection. Please call HR before taking your leave to verify your FMLA entitlement.

Refer to the HR Family and Medical Leave Policy for more information

C. Short Term Disability (STD) - Your Income Replacement for 26 Weeks

Employees unable to work due to their own illness or injury sustained outside of work, should apply for Short Term Disability. STD benefits pay the employee up to 26 weeks of income at 60% or 75% (if you signed up in 2015 for a one-time offer to a 15% benefit increase).

1. Call your Manager and Lincoln Financial, the hospital's Third Party Leave Administrator to inform them of your illness or injury. A Lincoln Representative will take your preliminary information then will send you an email confirmation.
2. Within 4-5 days of filing, your Lincoln Case Manager will call and ask questions pertaining to your illness or injury, name, address, phone and fax numbers of your doctor, initial and follow up MD appointments. Case Manager will also notify HR Leave Partner, Lorena Lima and your Manager of your leave request.
3. Case Manager will email some paperwork that needs your electronic signature.
4. Follow up with your doctor regarding documentation needed by Lincoln to approve your claim.
5. Once approved, available PTO will be used for the first week's pay. Any banked/frozen sick time can be used to supplement STD for employee to receive 100% of pay. Those who do not have frozen sick bank, pay will be at 60% or 75% of base rate. Employee does not accrue PTO during STD.
6. If required information is not received by Lincoln by the set deadline, your leave could be denied and you may not get your paycheck in a timely manner.

Please Note: STD provides income for 26 weeks but your job security depends on how many weeks of FMLA entitlement you have remaining. Upon use of your maximum entitlement, you may no longer have job protection.

Employees who contracted COVID 19 will have 100% pay from STD without having to use PTO or banked sick time.

Please contact HR Partner Eby Griffin at 203 739 4742 email: Elissa.Griffin@Nuvancehealth.org

D. Pension: Frozen since 2011 and 2012

Full retirement age for employees who have the Danbury Hospital Pension Plan is 65. If working beyond age 65, employee is entitled to delayed retirement benefits as follows:

Age When Employee Terminates And Pension Commences	Late Retirement Increase Amount Added on To Participant's Benefit Amount at Age 65
66	12%
67	25%
68	40%
69	57%
70	78%
71	102%

Note: Employee's age is rounded to the next full year if age at termination date is 6 months or greater.
 >Example: Employee's age at termination is 67 years and 6 months- so the 68 late retirement increase percentage of 40% is applied to the age 65 benefit amount.
 >Call Principal at least 2 months before your intended retirement date.
 >Employee receives pension payment on the first day of the month following the month of retirement.

Contact Information:

FMLA SHORT TERM DISABILITY	HR Leave Partner Lorena Lima 203 739 7586	Lincoln Financial 800 291 0112
PENSION	Director, Retirement Benefits Cecilia Fitzgerald 203 852 2212	Principal Financial Group 800 547 7754
COVID 19 Positive	HR Partner Elissa "Eby" Griffin 203 739 4742	Email: Elissa.Griffin@Nuvancehealth.org

Thank you all for your dedication. Stay well and be safe!

Leodie A. Salazar, RNC BSN
Grievance Committee Member

During this pandemic, many of us have been assigned to work in areas outside of our specialties. We have also been required to work shifts, days and hours very different from our commitment when first hired. In spite of our fear and the risk to our own health as well as the health and safety of our families, we all come to work and do our best to provide care for our very sick patients. Eventually, at times, the mental, emotional and physical stress can be overwhelming. Please remember that the people we work with are our “work families”. Let us talk to one another and iron out our differences instead of filing a complaint with management. Now is not the time for anyone of us to be given any discipline. ***Now, more than ever, is the time to support one another.*** Now is the time to be recognized and be appreciated for our dedication, for our commitment to our patients and to each other. We are the frontline caregivers, ***we are a team!!!***

LIAISONS

Do you know who your Union Liaison is for your floor? If not you might want to find out. Why you ask? We serve an important role for you! We attend monthly meetings where we find out hospital information, issues, and happenings and utilize what we learn to help the staff/unit. We bring your and your unit’s issues to the meeting to obtain advice and seek support and resolution(s). We also support and involve ourselves in unit grievances, attend AFT conferences and events and contribute to this newsletter. As you are aware, the hospital is a huge, complicated business that has many entities. Problems and occurrences constantly happen and some require a great deal of time, investigation, communication and intervention to resolve. So if you have an issue or problem talk to your liaison for guidance. He or she can advise you of your rights within our contract and, if needed, direct you to the appropriate person to assist you. In such a trying time, especially now, we are all in this together (sound familiar). Together we stand, divided we fall! Let’s stand up for our contract, our rights!

Marie Athans, R.N. B. C.

Liaison 6/7 West; In patient Behavioral Health

The hospital often views nurses as resistant to change. We want to know why and the impact for staff and patients.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, nurses are true chameleons!! New changes every day. Units have converted first to rule out, then Covid units. Units have moved to different floors; surgery has shifted patients to 8T.

Staff have stepped up to cross train, help in ICU as helpers and learn new skills. We are working with unfamiliar staff and new locations. We are adapting to the needs of patients amending our practices as needed.

We stand together and we do make a difference. Thank you for your dedication and caring.

Maryann Milleville, RN

Hi Everyone

I just want to start by saying how proud I am to be part of all the Nurses at Danbury Hospital! We all are Hero’s!! This is a difficult time, surgical nurses taking Cardiac patients, Cardiac and Rehab nurses caring for surgical patients and the rules changing all the time, sometimes hourly!! But we all are doing our best to care for the patients and help one another!

Please contact me if you have been exposed during these difficult times, I will do everything possible to help. Continue to be kind to one another, we are all under stress and show it differently! Take care of yourselves first, so your able to take care of others!

Call me with any Covid Exposure

Stay Safe and take care
Carol Grant
860-354-8403

PEDS CLOSED, temporarily

On Monday March 30, 2020, our pediatric unit was notified via a zoom meeting that we would close temporarily in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our patients have been referred to either CCMC or Yale for the interim. Although we miss our small unit tremendously, we also realized the need for us on the adult units due to the expected surge in patient volumes on the towers and in the ICU's.

Many of us have been helpers, but some have taken full assignments. Night shift has especially stepped up to the plate on this one. Navadi Mien and Aniece Collins took assignments on 9West, and 12T respectively. Both of these nurses are outstanding team builders and skilled leaders on our peds unit, and although challenging they did take these night assignments. Roslyn Forde has also been a great asset to the towers with her adult surgical experience. Our new team member, Anna Bohn was one of first ones to go to a Covid unit. We appreciate our night staff for their resilience and dedication. Each of us, on all shifts, have varied skill sets. For some of us, it has been years since we have worked with adult populations, yet we want to assist to the best of our ability and skill sets. Safety is our concern as well as it is for all of our Unit 47 members.

Also, thank you to Sue Kessler from our floor for making our homemade masks. She has been a huge help to 9 West as well. Yay, Sue! Our commendations go out to the nurses that work tirelessly in the ICU's, and on the units we have been assigned. 9W-9E-11E-12T-7S and 8 Buck have all accepted us graciously. A big thank you! Forgive me if I have left out any unit that we have been assigned that I haven't listed. All front-line workers are doing exceptional work while in this crisis situation. Big hugs to all from our tiny unit.

Kathleen Nix, RN

Community in Crisis Comes Together

Life has certainly changed since Covid-19 entered our lives. I find it so surreal to imagine that this disease has affected every human on this Earth! Covid sees no difference in people. It will attack anyone, anywhere. The only way to win this battle is to join forces, and social distance. Ironically, it seems that quarantining and social distancing has actually brought our society more together.

Families are spending more quality time with one another. Learning to cook, spring clean inside / outside and game nights. Teenagers actually staying home and having amazing conversations. Technology has made it possible for people to work remotely. Neighbors reconnecting with each other. Communities joining forces to support one another.

We are blessed to have a very strong community that supports us at Danbury Hospital. I am amazed with the amount of food we get on a daily basis from so many different local establishments. Love, the multiple signs Thanking Health Care Worker's. Coming out of work to find a letter of thanks on your windshield, makes it a little better. Parades of cars, and fire trucks. Communities making noise. The cheering when a Covid-19 patient is being discharged.

I pray that people continue to support one another. It is so nice to feel the positive vibes. Remember, "Be Kind to one another!"

In Solidarity,
Tiina Hawley VP

Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47

Update 47 is the official publication of Unit #47

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TOGETHER WE BUILD AND GROW