



The Flame

Lighting the Way for Quality Health Care

June 2016

Patient Safety Act (PSA)



Linda McDonald, RN
UNAP President

Wednesday, April 13 UNAP members rode the bus to the Statehouse to deliver post cards and talk to their Representatives about their staffing concerns and to ask for their support passing the “ Patient Safety Act”.

This was our second year trying to pass H 7863 & S 2695. Representative Eileen Naughton is championing the bill on the House side and Senator Josh Miller on the Senate side. The bill was heard and well received in both chambers. The “PSA”

sets a safe limit on the maximum number of patients a nurse may treat at one time.

This problem of staffing is not going away and the UNAP will stick with this until Safe Nurse to Patient Ratios is law.

Yearly Linda McDonald speaks to hundreds of student nurses about initiatives the UNAP promotes at the state house. The Patient Safety Act is just one of the ways to address concerns about staffing in many of Rhode Island’s hospitals. The Student Nurses Association Convention provides an opportunity for our future registered nurses to see the United Nurses and Allied Professionals at work to support and promote quality patient care.



President of the UNAP
Linda McDonald, addresses the 2016
Student Nurses Association Convention



Student nurses listen as Linda McDonald speaks about the Patient Safety Act



On UNAP Lobby Day, members from hospitals in Rhode Island and lobbyist Ray Sullivan gathered together, before the session began.

Around Rhode Island UNAP Vermont the locals Connecticut

UNAP Local 5086 Brattleboro Retreat Members Approve New 3 Year Contract

Members of the Brattleboro Retreat ratified a new three year contract earlier this spring. The Agreement commits the hospital to end mandatory overtime, provides wage increases from 5% to 11% and pay upgrades for inpatient social workers and substance abuse clinicians. The Local Union extended staff to patient ratios for all inpatient units- the only contract in the United Nurses and Allied Professionals that has such a provision.

UNAP Local 5201 Visiting Nurse Members Settle Contract

Nurses, Home Care Aides, and Clerical staff approved a new Agreement that protects all benefits and provides for a wage increase of 2% plus step increases. The Agreement runs for one year. This was the last negotiations for long time CNA leader Marie Gagne who was subsequently honored by her colleagues with a surprise retirement party.



Jack Callaci & Elaine Beauregard with Marie Gagne

Yale New Haven Hospital Seeks to Affiliate The Westerly Hospital

It was only a few years ago that the Westerly Hospital was part of a wave of free standing community hospitals in Rhode Island that were purchased or affiliated with a larger entity. In Westerly's case, the parent company is Lawrence and Memorial Hospital based in New London Connecticut. Now a second wave of

hospital consolidation is under way. Earlier this winter, Yale New Haven Hospital and Lawrence and Memorial Hospital (including The Westerly Hospital) announced their desire to combine. The regulatory process is under way in both the state of Rhode Island and the state of Connecticut. Pressures to combine into ever larger entities are a nationwide trend in both the hospital industry and the health insurance industry. The Union supports the effort based on commitments made by Yale New Haven Hospital including a commitment made in their application that clearly states "There are no planned consolidations, closures or reductions in any of the healthcare services offered at the Westerly Hospital."

Rhode Island Hospital Local 5098

The recent switch to Tufts has led to a host of issues for the carrier in administering the UNAP health insurance plan. Because the UNAP health insurance plan is vastly superior and different than the standard Lifespan plan, Tufts customer service reps have had a difficult time understanding all of the details. However, union leadership has been meeting with RI hospital and Tufts officials frequently over the past several months to fix any problems. While Tufts has improved their network of providers, issues still remain. Members who believe they have been charged incorrectly for any medical services are encouraged to contact the Union office.

Kent Hospital Local 5008 UNAP Members Stand Up to Radical Corporate Demands

In response to radical demands from the Care New England corporate office including bargaining proposals that would gut the pension plan, delete longevity pay, strip paid time off, cut per diem pay while increasing work requirements and dramatically shift medical insurance costs onto the backs of

employees, members have risen up in protest. Members have engaged in many informational pickets outside the hospital, demonstrated outside hospital events including employee awards night and worn Union buttons on a daily basis. The Union plans to take the issues into the public domain in coming weeks. Local President Rosemarie D. Desnoyers, RN said "We don't want to strike, but we will if we have to."

State Nurses Local 5019

In late March, the US Supreme Court announced it was deadlocked 4-4 in the Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association case, thereby upholding the lower district court ruling in favor of public sector unions. Prior to Justice Scalia's passing, public sector unions were bracing for an unfavorable decision from the Court, one that surely would have severely damaged all unions in Rhode Island and across the country. The Friedrichs case challenged the right of public unions to collect fees from the employees they represent for collective bargaining purposes, known as "fair share". The suit was filed on behalf of a group of teachers, but supported by national right-to-work groups, seeking to destroy public sector unions. The effect of an adverse decision would not only have crippled teacher, state employee and police unions, but would also weaken all of labor across the country. While labor dodged a bullet this time around, the anti-union group supporting the case has recently filed a petition with the Supreme Court for a re-hearing. Even if the Court chooses not to re-hear the Friedrichs case when a 9th judge is appointed, anti-labor groups will support another similar case in the coming year or two.

Seven Hills Rhode Island

The bargaining team for Local 5068 are preparing for bargaining this summer. The employees at Seven Hills Rhode Island are seeking to improve their wages, protect their health insurance and other



UNAP Local 5008 protest cuts to wages and benefits.

benefits. Michelle Armstrong will retire this July. She has worked tirelessly for the past 9 years to help organize her co-workers, she was on every bargaining team as the local president and processed hundreds of grievances. She will be missed by all.



Christine Croteau, Candy Jackson, Lisa Pendleton and Michelle Armstrong pictured above.

UNAP Local 5051 Secures State Budget Measure Improving Wages

Once again, UNAP, Local 5051, at Health Care & Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont (HCRS), has proved to be extraordinarily adept at lobbying at the Statehouse for wage increases for its membership. This year, the Local managed to get the legislature to pass a measure that will result in a 2% increase in wages, which will be coming out of a corresponding 2% increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates. The Local succeeded in doing this back in 2013. Well done!

UNAP Local 5082

Takes on Care New England (CNE)

Over the course of 2016, UNAP, Local 5082 at Memorial Hospital of RI has had CNE in its cross hairs. Not only is the Local in negotiations with CNE for a new contract, but the Local has been in a fierce battle with CNE over CNE's plan to dismantle much of Memorial Hospital.

In contract negotiations, the Local is fighting hard to prevent CNE from taking away vacation time and longevity pay, and watering down the health insurance benefit. The Local is having some success in improving contract language. The negotiations are ongoing.



UNAP Local 5082 protest the closing of Memorial Hospital's birthing center.

Highlight UNAP Leadership



Norman Farias

I have been a nurse at Rhode Island Hospital for 22 years. My path to nursing was a long and winding road. Of all the jobs I've had, nursing is my favorite. My first job at RIH was on a Med/Surg unit. For the past 12 years I have worked in IV Therapy putting in IV's and PICC lines. Not a day goes by that I don't get a thank you from someone. Seven years ago, I was approached by Helene Macedo, President of the RIH/UNAP about getting involved with the Union. I started as a rep, was elected to serve on the executive board and was then appointed executive VP by the RIH/ UNAP executive board. I currently serve as a liaison for the UNAP 2 days a week. My philosophy has always been, at work and in life, that it is easier to criticize the process than to participate. I choose to participate.

I have been involved in 2 negotiations at RIH. Our Union negotiated top wages and benefits, along with job security for our members. In my role as a liaison I represent members at Human Resources or with management. I also help members navigate the contract and make sure they know their rights.

I believe in the work the UNAP does for its members. I would encourage all members to get involved with their Union. You are the Union and together we can do great things.

In the meantime, while CNE has managed to get approval from the Department of Health (DOH) to close the Birthing Center at the hospital, the Local so far has prevented CNE from going forward with its plans to also close the ICU and a med/surg floor. Indeed, the Local has been ever present in the local newspapers, on the radio and television, in the courtroom and at various hearings at the DOH forcing CNE to re-think its plan. The battle continues as CNE and Southcoast of southeastern Massachusetts consider an affiliation.

Copley Hospital UNAP Local 5109

Copley hospital UNAP local says goodbye and best wishes to their local president Sandy Grace. Sandy is retiring this month. Andy Duff was elected to serve as president of the local. Congratulations to Sandy on her retirement and Andy in his new role as the local president.

UNAP Annual PIC Conference

Hundreds of registered nurses from around the state of Rhode Island listen to Donna White speak at UNAP's annual professional issues conference. This years topic was opioid addiction.



Donna White above and to the right speaking to a packed audience at the UNAP annual PIC Conference.

2016 Joan Medberry Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2 winners. Alex Brown, is son of Leslie Brown, RN who is a Case Manager at RIH. Teddy Doonis, is the son of Mary Doonis, an RN from the Copley Hospital in Vermont.



To read their essays click unap.org. Alex Brown to the right and Teddy Doonis depicted below





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