



This article is from one of our older newsletters. It is a good article to give you perspective on the union & how your involvement will make a difference!

RIH-UNAP Report

RI Hospital United Nurses & Allied Professionals, Local 5098

February 2020



A message from President Frank Sims, RN

Taking The Baton!

Every few years our membership demographic shifts as we say goodbye to our older members. They are the ones who fought to organize the hospital in 1992 & voted on their first contract back in 1994. They are the ones who were up against management and an administration that preferred there be no union presence. They are the ones who built a strong Unit Rep structure on their floors to continue to enforce their rights. They are the ones who experienced working at the hospital BEFORE it was union.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge all the newer members and younger faces at our 2018 Strike and Lock-out whose compassion and commitment were evident. And all of us out there together was an energizing experience - a very historic moment.

But I want to share some statistics about our current membership. Our demographics are shifting. In order to stay strong and grow, we need to make some changes.

- Since we voted on our Contract in the fall of 2018, four hundred (400) newly-hired members joined the union.
- Our membership has increased by 225 members in the past three (3) years to a current total of 2618 members.
- Forty percent (40%) of our current membership joined the union within the past 5 years.



As of late, I, the union staff and Executive Board members have been hearing about a variety of contract violations. Some of these issues involve seniority rights, changing shift hours, and bidding for positions. Whether or not these violations were intentional, the contract is not being enforced and you are losing the protection(s) that we fought to maintain at our last contract.

Let's focus on what we need to do from this point forward. No longer can we just depend upon the knowledge of our more seasoned members. It is time to take the baton!

- **LEARN YOUR CONTRACT.** Don't understand? Ask a Union representative. Some members have taken their manager's interpretation of the contract as accurate and valid, but in fact were given incorrect information. I advise that you seek contract interpretation from a union representative.
 - **COMMUNICATE!** If we don't hear about an issue, we don't know it exists!
 - **HAS A VIOLATION OCCURRED?** If you believe a violation has occurred, fill out our GRIEVANCE FACT SHEET & send it to us. We will contact you once we receive the form. Forms are available thru your Unit Rep, at the office or by going online to www.unap.org.
- **UTILIZE UNIT REPS:** Do you have an active, effective Unit Rep? If yes, find out what is happening from them & share your issues. Reps are to report to me with updates. **NO Unit Rep?** Determine the best person for the position. They will be trained & guided. Contact the office to learn more.
- **Talk with your Executive Board. Each Union Vice President** oversees specific groups/areas. They are an additional resource for communicating issues. They are listed on our website - www.unap.org. Contact the office for their cell phone number.
- **UNSAFE?** Complete the union's Unsafe Staffing FORM & send to us consistently. **A trickle has no impact. A flood will be noticed! Forms available.** Need forms? Check on your unit, call office or go to: <https://unap.org/ri-hospital-contract-and-forms>