

President's Message

By HealthCare-PSEA President Sandi Zubek, RN

www.healthcarepsea.org

How many patients do you think should lose their health insurance?

20 million? 25 million? 30 million?

Each of the health care reform laws considered by Congress this year would kick out at least one of those numbers of people from the ranks of the insured. They also would slice deeply into Medicare and Medicaid funds.

I don't know about you, but can you see what would become of our members if these bills became law?

Fewer people covered by

insurance equals fewer patients in our hospitals and nursing homes, which equals less revenue for our hospitals and nursing homes.

Want to guess what comes next? That's right: fewer of our members employed, taking care of our patients.

Heavier workloads and more stress for those of us left behind to "do more with less."

Call me crazy, but that sounds like a recipe for disaster.

Fortunately, to date, our members of HealthCare-PSEA and PSEA have worked hard with our allies

throughout America to send a message, loud and clear, to Congress and this administration.

It's time for our elected officials to get serious, fix the problems afflicting our health care system today, and build upon what works well within it, too.

Above all, their actions should do no harm. Kicking tens of millions out of coverage? I can't imagine anything MORE harmful.

Keep up the advocacy. We can win a better health care future, not only for our members, but for all Americans.

News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals

Bucks County Nurses Association

The Bucks County Health Department central office shares its building space with the Bucks County 4-H and Pennsylvania State Extension offices. So, if you work for the Bucks County Nurses Association, you might have the opportunity to walk past beautiful gardens on your way into the office. The flower beds are planted and maintained by the Master Gardeners, who are affiliated with the Extension office.

The Bucks County Nurses Association has 56 bargaining unit members. While the majority of

those nurses work in the Neshaminy Manor nursing home, many work for the health department at various locations in Bucks County. The programs they represent include: Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition (WIC); Immunizations; and Communicable Disease Control.



If you are in the area of the Bucks County Health Department central office, try to make a point to stop by and visit the beautiful gardens.

Highlands Hospital Nurses Association and Lab Technicians

Highlands Hospital's Behavioral Health Unit is well-known in the southwest and currently seeks to expand into a multi-countywide acute behavioral health program. If this succeeds, they will seek additional staff for the unit.

Currently, Michael Czernatowicz,

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Q&A: PA's Law Against Mandatory Overtime

Act 102 of 2009 prohibits health care facilities from requiring nurses and other direct caregivers to work in excess of agreed to, predetermined, and regularly scheduled daily work shifts. This law was a huge victory for Pennsylvania nurses, who fought for years to gain these important protections.

Q: How many mandatory overtime complaints have been filed since the law took effect?

A: There have been 2,586 complaint forms filed since 2009. On average, there are about 325 per year, and the highest year was 2015. This year, 306 complaints have been filed.

Q: What is the process for filing complaints for alleged violations of Act 102?

A: Complaint forms and information about Act 102 are available on the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

website at www.dli.state.pa.us. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Bureau of Labor Law Compliance takes written complaint forms, which can be found at any of the Bureau's regional offices. There is also an online system where people can file complaints. In addition, the Bureau receives information through phone calls or to its resource account.

When a complaint is filed, a Bureau investigator is assigned to the case. The Bureau must conduct an investigation and obtain sufficient evidence before allegations are prosecuted. The Bureau strives to interview both the worker and facility in these situations. They request all relative documentation from anyone involved with an investigation to address the alleged violation. After the case investigation is completed, it is submitted to the Bureau supervisor who then sends it to the central office in Harrisburg for final disposition.

When a case conclusion occurs, both parties are notified in writing.

If a fine occurs, the Bureau sends the penalty both by certified and regular mail. The facility has 30 days to either contest the violation or pay the fine. A facility could ask for a hearing, in which case a hearing examiner is appointed, and the case would go through the administrative hearing process.

Q: What is the status of Chapter 225 Prohibition of Excessive Overtime in Health Care Act Regulations?

A: This chapter implements the complaint and investigation procedures in Act 102 and the administrative penalties assessment provisions in the act. The provisions of this Chapter 225 were adopted July 18, 2014, and took effect July 19, 2014. The Bureau has met with stakeholders over the last two years asking for their input on regulation changes. There have been no changes made at this time.

Legislative Update

Pennsylvania has a short staffing and patient care crisis, but legislators are just not talking about it. How is nobody talking about this other than nurses? Legislators talk about health care every day, but it's always centered around money and insurance. How are they not talking about the crisis in care, and dangerous short-staffing?

You can change that. You are the expert, and PSEA can help you make your voices heard.

Mark your calendar for a grassroots member advocacy training hosted by PSEA in Harrisburg on March 13, 2018.

The goal of the training is to prepare a team of HealthCare-PSEA members who meet regularly with their own legislators and become those legislators' resource for health care issues, like safe nurse-patient ratios. This two-hour training will help you gain the skills, techniques, and knowledge that will prepare you to meet with

and educate your elected officials on issues that matter to you.

Join the growing number of health care professionals who are willing to step up and make sure legislators hear the real story about short staffing and how it impacts patient care and your profession.

Contact Jen Statler at jstatler@psea.org or (717) 255-7095 for more information.

News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals *(cont. from Page 1)*

Christina Hindman, and Stormy Knight are dedicated employees and Highlands Hospital Nurses Association & Lab Techs (HHNALT) members in the Behavioral Health Unit. They've been with the hospital for about two years, but gained exposure to behavioral health during clinical work.

Behavioral health then became a strong interest for Czernatowicz. He liked the varied aspects of the job and the connection with the supportive staff assisting him throughout training.

Knight reiterated many of his sentiments, adding collaboration among the Highlands Behavioral Health team as a major strength. She recognizes this environment is unique. Knight said you must not only think of patient and staff safety, but also trust each colleague to have your back.

A Connellsville native, Hindman wanted to stay here. She agrees with her colleague's observations, adding another big draw is patient interaction.



Highlands Hospital Nurses

These employees recommend you not allow preconceived notions about behavioral health, including perceived stigma, to deter you from this work. To them and other behavioral health employees, this is a most rewarding kind of work. It offers physical healing, and gives HHNALT members the opportunity to build strong, healthy, and productive behavioral health relationships with patients – total body and mind healing.

Indiana Registered Nurses Association

Where does the time go?! Summer has turned to fall in Pennsylvania, yet the nurses of the Indiana Registered Nurses Association continue serving their patients and building their union, without missing a beat.

Members gather monthly to discuss ongoing challenges at the hospital, catch up on each other's work and lives, ponder the broader challenges in modern health care, and more.

This has paid dividends, both in the short term and in the long term. Local leaders are pleased to report that thus far in 2017, IRNA members have turned in more than twice as many short-staffing forms to management as in 2016. Wisely, members ensure that the union leadership received copies.

This helped successfully push management to address understaffing in a number of departments across the medical center. Leaders encourage members to keep up the good work!

Separately, the local has successfully resolved a number of grievances slated for arbitration.

Members won back pay and improved hospital commitment to following the terms of the contract in these instances.

Other cases had to go fully to arbitration, as the local pushed to hold the hospital accountable. A few more remain scheduled for hearings, with a just settlement always a possibility in the meantime.

Finally, longtime grievance chair Jean Fyock opted not to seek another term in that position. Members salute her hard work and dedication. Likewise, they are pleased with the efforts of Karen Blystone, the new grievance chair handling enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement.

Somerset Professional Nurses Association

This year continues to be a year of big change for Somerset Professional Nurses Association members.

As part of the new contract that took effect this past spring, fair share fee payers now pay all their fair share monies to the union. Prior to that, they could opt to put that money into charity instead, while continuing to receive the pay, benefits, and protections without contributing their fair share to it. This new provision has put an end to that situation.

Even better, several new hires at the hospital chose to become full members of the local! Current members salute and welcome them aboard.

On a different note, members voted for a new team of leaders after President Sandi Zubek opted not to seek another term as local

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News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals *(cont. from Page 3)*

president. Starting Sept. 1, Bill Carnell took office as the new president. Casey Brown took on the role of vice president. Keeping the local's books and papers in-shape and up-to-date, Lori Saylor began a full term as treasurer. Not to be outdone, Kristin Yoder stepped up to serve as the local's new secretary.

Finally, the nurses continue to support the hospital's efforts to hire new nurses to work at Somerset Hospital, with bonuses and widespread searches/advertising ongoing across the region. They are confident this will bring in more new members in the weeks and months to come.



HealthCare-PSEA Advocacy Training

When: March 13, 2018

Where: PSEA Headquarters, Harrisburg

Why: We need safe staffing!

For more information or to reserve your spot for this training, please contact Jen Statler at jstatler@psea.org or (717) 255-7095.

Participants will be eligible for travel expense reimbursement.