



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer and spent time with their families, relaxed and re-energized. We need all our focus to be on preparing ourselves for our upcoming negotiations. It is extremely important for us to educate as many nurses as we can on contracts, participation, and commitment to get the best contract we can get. We need to let nurses know what happens when we decide to strike. There will be no wages, no benefits and the hospital can lock us out. They can bring in agency nurses who are eager to make a lot of money and do not care about the issues for which we are striking. These nurses are not supporting our cause for things like safe staffing or increased wages by working and helping the hospital out.

Participation is key and the letter to be part of the negotiation team will be out soon. Nurses from all areas should be represented, the contract sections that need to be revised will be addressed, health and safety language as well as staffing, health insurance and wages. Everyone needs to be engaged, and educated about the issues because without all of us nothing will get done.

I continue to look forward to working with all of you so please feel free to reach out to me with issues or concerns. I work on N7 7A-7P.

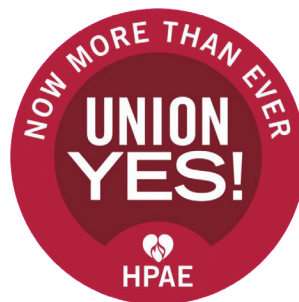
In Solidarity,  
**Doris Bell, RN**

## HPAE LOCAL 5118 UPDATES

Local 5118 needs nurses to join the staffing committee. The staffing committee meetings are every other month on the third Thursday of the month. They meet from 9am-10am at the hospital. The next meetings for this year are September 21 and November 16. We need at least four nurses to be a part of this committee. The census has been extremely high at the hospital, and we've all been feeling it. Consider being a member of this committee to prove to the hospital we need more nurses. Any med surg nurse that is in a 6:1 ratio should be filling out an assignment despite objection (ADO form) every time. We gather these forms as evidence for our negotiations.

October 4 is our next general membership meeting. The meetings will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Camden at 8am, 1pm, 4pm. The 8pm meeting will be a Zoom call. Please make every effort to attend one of these meetings as we do not always know about issues if no one reaches out to any of the officers/ reps. This is your opportunity to talk with us.

On September 14 we are holding an event at the Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Twp promoting our safe Staffing Bill. NJ Senate Candidates supporting safe staffing, Sen. Linda Greenstein and Sen. Andrew Zwicker, will be in attendance.



## UNION CONTRACT LANGUAGE

### Understanding Seniority and Transfers

Many Bargaining Unit (BU) RN's have asked about seniority and how it relates to transfers out of the BU or onto another unit.

There are three different scenarios:

1. A bargaining unit RN transfers to another unit (as a BU RN). The RN has 60 days to return to the previous unit, providing a position is available, and retain the "unit" seniority from before the transfer. BU seniority does not change since the RN never left the bargaining unit. ARTICLE 15.12
2. A BU RN transfers outside of the BU. Example: RN takes a management position, or transfers to a non-union area. The RN has 90 days to return to a BU position, in order to retain BU seniority. The RN is not a BU RN during these 90 days. ARTICLE 15.1(3)
3. A BU RN resigns/terminates employment with Cooper. All seniority ends at that time. If the RN becomes a re-hire in the future, all BU seniority starts over. ARTICLE 15.3

Feel free to contact me if you have any seniority questions.

**Patti Scharff**

## PETER J. MCGUIRE SCHOLARSHIP

### Union Labor at It's Best

For the 12th year, in honor of Peter J. McGuire, the father of labor, HPAE Local 5118 represented the Cooper nurses and presented a \$1000 scholarship to a Rutgers Nursing Student. This year's recipient, Vivianna Borden, will be studying Nursing in Camden, and coming to Cooper for her clinical. Vivianna's parents are union members with Communications Workers of America (CWA).

## NURSES HELPING NURSES

The COVID pandemic was unprecedented: nothing could have prepared the world for such a life-altering event. For those of us working in the medical field, our world has become increasingly more complex and challenging. Many of us and our colleagues were on the front lines, and our efforts mirrored another historic trend: the wars. We were losing our patients faster than ever, breaking the most brutal news to loved ones, and watching droves of patients cycle through a place that once stood for hope and healing. For many nurses, mental health and healing were already an uphill battle; the effects of the quarantine, our long shifts, lack of staff, and supplies, and the inability to vent our frustrations left many nurses feeling scared, alone, and for lack of a better phrase, infected with a new sense of darkness. Although the outward physical appearance of society has opened up, slowly allowing the sunlight to shine, many nurses remain privately mentally traumatized and or depressed staring inside a dim and cold hole.

Looking forward - the best thing we can do for ourselves, our patients, our families, and our lives - is to do whatever we can to give ourselves grace and space to rest and work within. Mental health is just as important as physical. As nurses, we tend to care for others and not ourselves. The goal in all we do is HEALTH. You matter we matter, and we can tackle the Mental Health Monster together.

If you or a colleague is struggling with mental health issues, get the help you deserve.

Please get in touch with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP ) at 856 342- 2280

### **You Matter**

*When everything is going wrong  
and you are struggling to carry on.  
I want you to know you matter.  
When you are feeling hurt and pain  
and try your hardest to stay sane.  
I want you to know you matter.  
When you feel you've no one to care  
and you are falling into despair.  
I want you to know You Matter.*

- Cheryl Lee

In Solidarity,  
**Tina Jones**  
Ambulatory Officer

## GRIEVANCE CORNER

### Grievance update:

- ♥ We won a grievance at the 3rd step for an RN in the OR for a change in her posted schedule. Management has agreed to abide by our CBA; Article 7.3; the last sentence of the 1st paragraph: "Posted schedules will not be changed without the mutual consent of the Registered Nurse and the Clinical Director." If this should happen, please let us know immediately!
- ♥ We took 2 grievances to the 2nd step for incorrect cancellations. Yes, it is still happening. We are waiting for their response.
- ♥ Nurses are still being disciplined for the unauthorized access of patient charts. The first offense is a written warning. The consent forms are available from HR and must be renewed every year. Verbal consent from the patient is not acceptable.

### How to file a grievance

If you have any questions regarding an issue that could be a grievance, please contact me immediately.

We only have 10 business days to file a grievance from the time the incident or harm occurred. We will talk through the details of your situation and will move forward based on our discussion.

### Union Reps

We are always looking for nurses who want to be trained to become a Union Rep for their area. Your firsthand knowledge of what occurs on your unit when someone needs to file a grievance is invaluable.

Contact me at: [annmcc@comcast.net](mailto:annmcc@comcast.net) or (609) 876-9721.

**Ann McCausland**  
Grievance Chair

## THE UNION DIFFERENCE

This past Labor Day, HPAE put out a statement of solidarity that discussed the importance of safe staffing in healthcare. As a local, it is important to focus on what makes our union strong and how to achieve the goals we want to reach.

As union members, we make up a large group of like-minded individuals, who help to negotiate and enforce a contract with management that guarantees things such as ratios, paid time off, secure scheduling, raises, and the ability to file grievances when your contract is broken. This contract is created for a set period of time and is negotiated with Cooper. Despite common rhetoric, work standards and conduct are important in a unionized workplace. This ensures everyone is required to meet standards that are pre-negotiated, both employees and management. This also ensures equality in hiring, promotions, and other workplace processes.

Our national Union, American Federation of Teachers gives us a national platform to speak out on behalf of our patients and our profession. On the State level HPAE has been integral in writing and getting laws passed that protect us and our patients.

Our collective voices have allowed us to create programs that force hospitals to work on safer workplaces, implement policies that decrease unsafe practices such as mandatory floating outside of areas of specialties, ensuring safer patient ratios and patient care improvements.

However, without every voice and body in our union, we would not be as strong as we are. With the power of a union, we can continue to make changes. As our negotiation time draws near, it is important for us to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity.

**Tess Ianni, RN**  
VP Local 5118





## Address Service Requested

A Newsletter for the members of  
HPAE Local 5118 at Cooper Hospital

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Phone: 201-262-5005  
[www.hpae.org](http://www.hpae.org)

