



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I just wanted to start off by expressing my appreciation and gratitude to all the Cooper nurses that I have worked with, the LEB, and all the nurses that I have met during my time here at Cooper.

I would not have been who I am today as a nurse and now, President of our Local Union without your guidance and support. It was inspiring to sit in a room full of hard working, dedicated, and compassionate nurses during negotiations and see the support and determination. It was an unforgettable experience standing next to a sea of nurses during the leafletting. Even after all the tireless and exhausting shifts you still showed up and fought for better ratios, wages, violence prevention, and so much more.

Our fight for better staffing, a violent free work environment and preservation of our rights as Union members is ongoing. It is important for us to stay united, have our voices heard and fight the good fight. We cannot do it without you. WE ARE THE UNION!

**Alex Boffo, RN**  
President, Local 5118

## WELCOME TO THE LEB, TORI

My name is Victoria Piatti, Tori for short, and I am the newest LEB member. I started my nursing career at CUHC in January 2021 as an intermediate nurse on Pavilion 8. Since starting, I have been a full-time nurse, a UBP nurse, and I am now a hospital float intermediate nurse. My time at Cooper, specifically on P8, taught me a lot about teamwork and a lot about the importance of getting involved and having your voice heard. I, along with the current LEB President, Alex Boffo, chair P8's Unit-Based Council (UBC) and help the team there navigate projects, address issues, and boost team morale. My time spent on P8, along with my time spent watching negotiations last year, showed me that I wanted to be more involved with the union. Negotiations only showed a glimpse of what our union and LEB really do. They work tirelessly to fight for us nurses. With that being said, I am truly fortunate to have this opportunity to join a new team, the LEB, and be welcomed graciously by all the board members. I look forward to everything we will work on and accomplish in this upcoming year!

## CONTRACT LANGUAGE

We received a lot of questions regarding the Holidays this year. Below is some information. **Please refer to Article 7.6 – Holiday Schedules/Pay for more information.**

- If an employee is absent on their scheduled work shift the day before and/or the scheduled shift after a paid holiday, the employee will receive regular pay for that holiday and is not entitled to holiday pay. However, the employee will receive PTU pay for the callout/absence
- When the RNs required holiday shift falls on a weekend, it shall count toward their holiday and their weekend shift requirement.
  - A holiday for holiday switch will not count as the holiday off on the holiday rotation list.
  - When switching a holiday for a holiday, nurses shall forego being granted low census PTO or any other opportunity to be moved off the holiday unless no other employees in the clinical unit desires PTO that holiday shift.
  - If an employee does not work when assigned pursuant to this Article, due to call out, the employee may be scheduled to replace the absented holiday within a calendar year based on staffing needs as deemed necessary by the Clinical Director. Such scheduling will be subject to patient care needs.
- **Recent ADOs** (Assignment Despite Objection) have been around inappropriate assignments/ratios – if you feel your assignment is unsafe, please escalate it to your direct manager and further to CODs if needed. Please complete an ADO form to report your unsafe assignment or ratio. The union uses the ADO forms as evidence when in discussions about ratios and staffing with Cooper. Place completed ADOs in union mailboxes – by Dorance elevators and Cafeteria.
- **Outpatient Locations.** How is your work environment? How is your staffing? Ever need a rep? Please reach out directly to an officer if you need anything!
- **Summer Vacation Sign Ups are in progress!** Please refer to Article 19.1 Vacation Scheduling for more information.

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## CONTRACT LANGUAGE

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- Vacation week sign ups during the period of May 1 through November 1 of each calendar year, employees shall submit requests in writing by February 15.
- Employees will be notified, in writing/Kronos, by their Clinical Director by February 28 of the approval or denial of such vacation requests.
- Requests made after February 15 shall be on a first-come first-served basis.
- Vacation submissions shall not be unreasonably denied.
- Prior to accepting a transfer within Cooper in a BU position, RN must disclose during the job offer any vacation requests that may have been approved in the current position to the hiring manager. The hiring manager will determine whether vacation requests can be honored based on unit needs.

## UNION MEMBERSHIP

I would like to explain to you some basics in what it means to be in a Union. When you were hired at Cooper as a nurse, you became a member of our Union. Our union is HPAE Local 5118.

Our union fights to improve our wages, benefits, and safe workplace conditions, to name a few. Our new Union contract is the best ever.

We could not have done it without the strength of our Bargaining Unit, all of US!

Our union gives us a **voice** and **power** in the workplace.

What can we all do?

We need to know and understand our Union contract. You can find our contract in your union binders on your unit, in the binders are the rep list, information on unions and our contract. You can also view the contract on our website, HPAE.org search Local 5118.

GET INVOLVED!! How? Attend general membership meetings, become a union rep or officer, and ask questions. Know your rights!!

Local Executive Board (LEB) communicates via email, personal email only, you may receive emails from the LEB, HPAE and Action Network. You may receive a robo call to inform you of upcoming events. Please take a moment to open those emails!!!! UPDATE are also posted on our Facebook page.

Please feel free to reach out to our officers any time!!

In Solidarity,

**Carolyn Ali RN**

Treasurer Local 5118

## UNDERSTANDING THE WAGE STEP SCALE

Every year in June, all RNs, regardless of years of experience, receive an across the board 4 % raise.

When a Union RN is hired, their experience years for the wage step scale are determined according to Article 23.3. Experience is defined as Full Time acute care hospital for the in-patient, or relevant experience for ambulatory nurses. The RN's wage on the step scale, is determined by those experience years.

**Example:** RN received license in May of 2015. RN worked in a clinic for 5 years, then 5 years full time at an acute care hospital. RN is hired at Cooper as Union RN in January of 2025. RN is placed on the wage step scale with 5 years experience, as the clinic years do not count as experience. Again, Article 23.3.

Those RNs with less than 32 years of experience also receive an additional 1% raise when they move up a year. This occurs in the month their experience years was initially determined. This is the month of the RN's Bargaining Union Seniority date, and wage step increase. Article 23.2

**Example:** RN hired as Union RN in January 2025. Wage step will occur in month of January, as experience was determined at that time.

There has been confusion as to the additional raise being RN licensure date anniversary. It is not the licensure date. An RN's licensure date may not be the same as the determined contractual experience years upon hire.

In simple terms-

- RN with less than 32 years experience receives 1% step increase in the month of RN's Bargaining Union Seniority date. Bargaining Union Seniority month=wage step month.
- RN with 0-2 years experience, do not receive 1 % step until year 3. They are hired at the 2 year wage step. RN does receive 4 % June raise with all RN's.
- All RN's receive 4 % across the board raise in June of 2025 and 2026.

Hope this helps clear up the confusion.

## STAFFING CORNER

### Agency Contracts

At our Staffing Committee meeting on January 16, we asked Kathy Devine to explain the status of the Agency Nurses' contracts.

Response: Some agency nurses' contracts have been adjusted due to the new hires coming off their orientation. As new nurses come off orientation, nursing will look at the need of certain specialty agency nurses. i.e., critical care nurses, OR and PACU nurses.

We also raised our concern about the units that highly rely on the use of agency nurses. Kathy stated that they are looking at them closely.

### CDU Swing Nurses

We informed the Nursing Administration that nurses' assignments are being split between the new section of the CDU and the original CDU. We presented our safety concerns that arose due to the split assignments. We proposed that the new section of the CDU should be staffed with four RNs and the original section should be staffed with 5 RNs in order to comply with our staffing ratio language and the safety of the assignment.

Cooper's Response: If there are safety concerns with the nurses' assignments to discuss them with management and the CODS real time. Such BS! Our one option is to file grievances every time this occurs.

### LVAD Assignments

There is a new LVAD program that has been implemented on Pavilion 9. When there are new programs, we are hyper focused on the staffing to make sure RNs have safe appropriate assignments. When we first raised "what is the ratio going to be," Nursing did not want to commit to a set ratio.

When we revisited in during our Staffing Committee meeting, they committed to a 3:1 assignment.

## RECIPE CORNER

### Easy Beef Stew

Too cold to spend your day in the kitchen? Here's a recipe for an easy beef stew that will keep you warm and full on these bitter, cold days!

What you need:

- 1 lb. Beef Chuck (usually sold cubed)
- 2 packets of Au Jus Gravy
- 2 cans of Beef Broth
- 1 small onion cut (optional)
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Salt
- Pepper
- Garlic powder
- 1/3 cup of red wine (optional)

Place all ingredients in a crock pot and cook on low for 8 hours or on high for 6 hours.

Hope you enjoy this easy, delicious meal!

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### Exceptionally Good Dip

- 2 Avocados, peeled and diced
- 1 cup of cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
- 1/4 red onion, finely chopped
- Lime juice to taste
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- Kosher salt to taste
- Tortilla chips for serving

In a medium sized bowl, mix the ingredients together, adding more lime juice and salt as needed. Serve with a side of tortilla chips. ENJOY!





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

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