



ACTIVIST

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THE UNION FOR NURSES BY NURSES

RNs Demand Safe Staffing... Now!



Poster Inside!

RNs, public officials and media speak out for safe staffing across the U.S.

UAN's staffing crisis visibility campaign hits stride from coast to coast —

....patients and nurses are at risk in today's hospitals ...nurses are committed to making hospitals safe ...UAN is a strong new voice for America's nurses... just days from now, UAN, CMAs and nurses everywhere join forces to call a halt to staffing practices that put patients and nurses at risk. Campaign buttons, pins, posters, banners and brochures for patients have been distributed to CMAs. Plans have been made for candlelight vigils, rallies, lobby days and other activities. Media kits, news releases, media advisories and op eds have been sent. Now it's time to put all the preparation into action. It's time to raise our voices and

DEMAND SAFE STAFFING...NOW!

The New York Times Gives Registered Nurses, Staffing Crisis, Page One Coverage

"Nurses, hospital executives and health care experts say that a shortage of nurses across the country is becoming so severe that it threatens patient care," is the lead in the Sunday, April 9 front page *New York Times* article.

In the *Times* article, UAN Director Susan Bianchi-Sand is quoted as saying, "Wages are always an issue, but they are not the principal issue. Safe staffing and the quality of patient care are higher priorities."

Sisters and Brothers —

This year, for *National Nurses Week*, let's skip the cake and pass up the platitudes. Instead, let's put up the posters, sign the petitions, hand out safe staffing tips to patients, families and media and blow the whistle on management that wrings their hands over a staffing crisis of their own making.

Demanding an end to unsafe, life-threatening, career-ending staffing practices is the best way I can think of to observe *National Nurses Week* in 2001. There'll be time and reason enough for celebration when we've made hospitals safe again.

**In Solidarity,
Cheryl Johnson, UAN Chair**

UAN - THE UNION ARM OF ANA

Workplace Safety Setback

In tossing out the new OSHA ergonomics standard that had just gone into effect in January, Congress and the Administration nullified a safety rule providing important protection for nurses and other workers. Expect more back injuries and fewer workplace safety protections for nurses.



Staffing Survey No Surprise for RNs

UAN Vice Chair Ann Converso told reporters at the February release of ANA's 2001 Staffing Survey the public has every reason to be alarmed by the results. 75% of the 7,300 nurses responding said the quality of care has declined and 70% cited inadequate staffing as the big reason.

"Today, patients and nurses are at risk. That's not just unacceptable," said Converso. "It's an outrage." Converso outlined UAN demands for safe staffing and state and federal legislation to back up those demands.

"We must improve nurses working conditions," said ANA President Mary Foley, who presented the survey results. DCNA member and Critical Care Unit nurse Nona Campbell described real-life working conditions and Becky Hartman of Wichita, Kan., told how inadequate staffing left her mother paralyzed.

EDITORIAL

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WINNERS

New York and New Jersey

400-plus RNs at Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point, N.J., have chosen NYSNA to represent them – for NYSNA an historic first collective bargaining agreement outside New York. Kudos also to NYNSA on unanimous passage of whistleblower legislation in both houses of the New York state legislature...and boos to Governor Pataki, who declined to sign it — again!

Oregon and Michigan

ONA enlisted the support of Oregon House speaker Mark Simmons to introduce a strong measure for state regulation of hospital nurse staffing. RNs at Michigan's Lapeer Regional Hospital won a mid-term contract wage increase over and above a scheduled May 2001 increase – to help attract and retain nurses.

Minnesota: RN Pressure On

With contract talks underway for about 9,000 RNs at 12 Twin Cities hospitals and other contracts expiring across the state in May and June, MNA's Start Hearing Nurses Campaign is keeping the pressure on. MNA President Joanne Waldron told cheering nurses at a big April 5 rally that "Nursing today is much like being with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea" citing understaffing, huge workloads and long hours. Waldron warned of strikes if new contracts don't address these issues.

State Legislative Action

Staffing legislation in various forms has been introduced in 28 states, including:

MANDATORY OVERTIME PROHIBITION

California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, West Virginia

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Hawaii, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, West Virginia

STAFFING RATIOS

Connecticut, Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, West Virginia

For details — your CMA or www.UANNurse.org

[UANNurse.org](http://www.UANNurse.org)

Ohio and Alaska

600 RNs at Mercy Hospital in Canton, Ohio vote April 26-28 on representation by the Ohio Nurses Association. In Ketchikan, Alaska, RNs vote May 2 on representation by the Alaska Nurses Association.

UAN / VA National Council Powers up for National Bargaining

More power for nurses at Veterans Administration hospitals as a new UAN / National VA Council prepares to bargain its first national master contract. Nurses in 21 Veterans Administration locals voted to consolidate and form a national council of VA RNs under the UAN banner. Elected to the first VA National Council are: Michael Boucher, President (Durham, NC); Emma Jean Powell, Vice President (Atlanta, GA); Jeffrey Johnson, Secretary (Tuscaloosa, AL); Alice Staggs (Cincinnati, OH); Rebecca Johnson (Albany, NY); Gene Akers (Martinsburg, WV); and Marvin Larisey (Augusta, GA).

...and Veterans Hospital in Tampa Wins Magnet Status

Congratulations to the 400-plus UAN union staff nurses at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida, which was recently honored with Magnet Status. Awarded for nursing excellence in the delivery of patient care by the America Nurses Credentialing Center, just 31 health care organizations nationwide have won Magnet Status recognition over the past eight years.

DATES

May 2-4	Staff Nurse Summit Marquette, MI
May 6-12	National Nurses Week (Health Care Crisis Week)
June 26	UAN Safe Staffing Lobby Day, DC
Jun 27-28	UAN National Labor Assembly, DC
Oct 4-7	Coalition of Labor Union Women, Las Vegas

How soon can
your nurse
get there?

CALL

Good
question.

