

Take Action Now! Contact Your Elected Representatives to Protect RNs' Overtime

While overtime pay for other first responders, from firefighters to LPNs, was specifically protected in new overtime pay rules introduced April 23 by the Bush administration's Department of Labor, registered nurses were not so fortunate.

UAN leaders noted that the rules raise more questions than answers about how overtime rules will be applied to RNs and introduce new loopholes for employers looking to avoid paying RNs overtime pay.

"Registered nurses should not have to read between the lines to infer that their overtime pay is protected, but should have the same guaranteed overtime protections as other important, protected groups of workers,"

said UAN President Cheryl Johnson, RN.

The new rules make it easier for employers to re-classify RNs as salaried—not hourly—employees by loosening so-called "docking" provisions that have previously protected RNs.

The rules specify a new type of employee called a "team leader" who is exempt from overtime pay even if he or she "does not have direct supervisory responsibility"—opening the door for employers to try to classify RNs as team leaders. Some RNs are already designated as team leaders by their hospital management.

RNs who earn more than \$100,000 in annual salary are also at risk for losing their overtime pay. That may not seem

like a concern now, when average annual pay for RNs is \$49,840, but average RN wages would only have to grow 5 percent each year for an RN to hit the ceiling and lose her overtime pay in 15 years.

Use the enclosed flier on the RN overtime pay take-away to spread the word among your fellow RNs, and contact your senators and representative to let them know that RNs demand overtime pay protection.



Congratulations to the nurses of the Shelby County Medical Center in Harlan, IA, who chose INA/UAN as their union February 26. A majority of RNs voted in favor of the union. Key issues included staffing and a voice in decision-making.

Michigan nurses (MNA) at the Ottawa County Health Department ratified a new three-year contract that includes a minimum 7.5 percent raise over the contract and retroactive pay for 2003, and improvements to sick leave and bereavement benefits.

Support Angelica Workers

Workers at Angelica Textile, a major supplier of hospital linens and owner of nurse uniform retailer Life Uniform, are stepping up efforts to organize with UNITE. To find out how you can support these workers in their drive to organize, visit:

www.dirtylaundry.org

National VA Council Elected



RN members of the 2004 National VA Council include (front row): Vice President Donna King*; Members-at-Large Diane Mayes* and Alice Staggs; Secretary Irma Westmoreland*; (back row) Members-at-Large Rebecca Johnson and Sandra McMeans*; and, President Mike Boucher. Not pictured is UAN liaison Ann Converso. (* newly elected) The NVAC held its annual meeting in Washington, DC, March 29-31.