

Minnesota: Ergonomics Fight is On

Members of the Minnesota Nurses Association and other allied unions are fighting for a proposed state ergonomics standard (SF260). The bill passed the state Senate's Jobs, Housing and Development Committee in March and is under consideration before the full Senate. If passed, it would make Minnesota the third state to have implemented an ergonomics standard: California has a limited standard, and Washington had an ergonomics standard before it was repealed by the pro-business lobby last fall.

Staffing Watch

California's landmark ratio law, in effect since January 1, is generating guardedly optimistic reviews.

Union leaders observed in an anecdotal survey that about 58 percent of hospitals reported compliance with the law (*San Francisco Business Journal*, March 2, 2004).

Meanwhile, many hospitals are predictably dragging their feet, complaining that the staffing measure leaves them unable to coordinate coverage for nurses going to the bathroom.

The state hospital lobbying group is suing the state Dept. of Health Services over the law.

Crafting UAN's Constitution — 'A Living Document by Staff Nurses'

UAN delegates provided critical feedback on the content and direction of the drafted UAN constitution to members of the Organizational Structure Committee and the UAN Executive Council March 23 in Chicago.

"Our goal is to craft a living document written by staff nurses that will be the foundation for UAN's growth, directed by and totally committed to the interests of staff nurses," said UAN President Cheryl Johnson, RN. "This draft constitution places the ultimate decision-making authority in the hands of the National Labor

Assembly—delegates elected by UAN staff nurses, who comprise the union's largest governing body and with representatives from every state."

The year-long process of drafting the constitution has included consultation with elected leaders and staff in every UAN state. Additional feedback and informational meetings between are being held throughout the spring to ensure that all ideas are considered by the time NLA delegates meet for final action on the constitution in June.



Members of the Organizational Structure Committee include (front row, left) Debbie Lund (OR), Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez (NY), Linda Warino (OH), Mike Nilsson (FL), (back row) Ann Converso (NY), and Beverly Thorp (CO). Not pictured here is OSC member Kate Steenburg (MT).

Lee Balgemann Photographics, 2004

Did You Know...

Skilled nursing facilities have the highest injury rates of any of the 13,000 work-sites surveyed by OSHA in 2003. These facilities received more OSHA notices, at 2,602, than any other standard industrial code classification.