

UPdate

MI Visiting RNs Win Wage Increase

MNA/UAN nurses at Visiting Nurse Services of Southeast Michigan recently approved a three-year contract that provides for a base wage increase of 10 percent over the contract term. The agreement also streamlines the compensation and scheduling system by implementing a new salary-plus-bonus system that reduces scheduling and reporting responsibilities.

WI Nurse Gets Probation After Patient Death

In a plea agreement, WI nurse Julie Thao pleaded no contest to 2 misdemeanor charges for improperly dispensing medication, while a felony charge of negligence was dropped. She now faces three years of probation, during which she will be barred from working in critical-care settings and emergency rooms. Supporters in attendance believed it was as good of an outcome for Thao as could be expected, but believed the decision would hinder nurses' ability to quickly deliver treatment in an emergency. Prosecution for medical errors is relatively rare.

Did You Know ...

Union RNs are significantly more likely to have pensions and health care coverage than their non-union counterparts. In a new report from the UAN, more than 80 percent of RNs represented by unions have health care coverage and pensions, compared to about 65 percent of non-union RNs. For more information, contact Robert.Lucore@UANNurse.org.

Union Members Rally for Pro-Worker Measures in New Congress

Despite the frigid temperatures, thousands of union members and activists gathered on Capitol Hill Dec. 8 to bring home the message that every worker deserves the chance to choose a union. Responding to calls by workers across the country, leaders of the new Democratic Congress are pledging support for bills like the Employee Free Choice Act—which removes barriers faced by workers who choose a union and bargain a first contract—a legislative solution to the Kentucky River NLRB rulings removing union protections for many workers, and increased oversight of OSHA and the Department of Labor.

Western Nurse Leaders at UAN Training

About 66 participants from Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii attended sessions on basic communications, grievance handling, internal organizing and local unit structure at UAN's second local bargaining unit training in Portland, Ore. The classes were designed to give local union officers and stewards the tools they need to effectively represent members and conduct local union business. The next local bargaining unit training is tentatively planned for April 2007 in New York City.

UAN at Health Care Quality Conference

Vice President Ann Converso represented UAN at the IHI's 18th annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care December 10-13, where IHI President Donald M. Berwick announced a new national campaign aimed at sharply reducing incidents of patient harm in U.S. hospitals by five million. IHI estimates that 15 million such incidents occur each year. The Five Million Lives Campaign aims to enlist 4,000 hospitals. The forum drew more than 5,000 participants from hospitals in the U.S. and abroad, with nearly 100 workshop and discussion sessions focused on health care delivery and improvement.

NY Nurses Speak Out Against Hospital Closure Plan

NYSNA/UAN nurses came to the state capitol in Albany to urge the state legislature to reject the recommendations of the Berger Commission on Healthcare in the 21st Century, slated to close as many as nine hospitals and reconfigure another 28 in the state. The plan, commissioned by outgoing NY Gov. George Pataki (R), ignores the importance of community hospitals, say nurses, doesn't significantly improve costs or health care, and displaces thousands of nurses without transition assistance.