

DCNA Together – Making a Difference in DC

January 2019



DCNA Welcomes Incoming President, Katrina Clark

I would like to extend my gratitude to all of the DCNA Nurses and health care professionals. I will serve you to the best of my ability. All support is welcomed for the growth of this organization.

Happy New Year,

Katrina Clark, President



LPNs at Children's School Services Win Pay Raises

Just prior to Christmas, DCNA negotiators reached an agreement with Children's School Services providing across the board 3% pay increase for LPNs in 2019. Additionally, DCNA negotiated pay parity increases for numerous LPNs in accordance with their years of experience. These agreements occurred in wage reopener negotiations.

DCNA Calls for Safe Staffing and Union Recognition at DC Council Hearing

On February 6th, DCNA/UMC President Roberta LeNoir testified before the DC Council on a UMC Oversight Hearing. Excerpts from her testimony are reproduced here and her full testimony, along with the testimony of Walakewon Blegay, Esq., DCNA Staff Attorney, can be found at www.dena.org.

Unsafe ratios have been associated with a number of negative patient outcomes, such as higher surgical mortality and higher complication rates due to errors. Nurses do not have ancillary staff to assist them and have to service many patients with high acuity levels all at once. Nurses are just providing survival care at UMC. Nurses at one time were able to provide patients with constant monitoring, education, research and provide the attention to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of the patient. Nurses were able to take the time to educate their patient[s] and work with the patients to improve their care. I am an Emergency Room nurse at UMC and I personally often have to provide care to multiple patients at once without techs or any assistive staff. Improved ratios will only benefit the hospital in retaining nurses and avoiding nurse burnout.

Nurses at UMC like myself have labored to help UMC reach the success of providing care to residents of Wards 7 and 8 at the most difficult period when UMC was experiencing financial hardship and bankruptcies. We continued our care when linens, pharmaceutical, food, staffing and technological support vendors pulled out during the bankruptcies. We continued our care when environmental conditions were poor and heating and air conditioning units failed and could not be repaired. We continued our care with inadequate equipment, insufficient staffing, no support staff and more. We have endured the most difficult times at UMC, including [constant] changes in management which often frustrated the nurses because of the lack of consistency. We have proven our commitment to your community and should not be forgotten as the District moves forward with the new hospital to service the East of the River.

Assignment Despite Objection – Deborah Thomas

Filing an Assignment Despite Objection serves to report workplace conditions that jeopardize your practice. It gives documentation and validity to your concerns. Filing this form serves notice to the nursing supervisor responsible for the assignment that conditions of work are being questioned. According to The DC Board of Nursing, Nurses have the following options in the face of a professionally objectionable assignment:

- Accept the assignment- This will leave you open for future liability if a negative outcome occurs due the adverse condition created by the assignment.
- Accept the assignment and file an objection or appeal. This provides appropriate notice to nursing supervision. This will be a basis of proof for problems which may occur with the assignment.
- Reject the assignment- This may cause problems for the nurse who might be charged with insubordination or even fired.

Reporting and acknowledging staffing disparities has taken on much more importance. There are many variables operating within the workplace creating a dangerous imbalance in staffing patterns:

- Decreased use of paraprofessional and assistive personnel.
- No definitive ratios or staffing patterns looking at acuity
- Lack of professional support from nursing administration.

This is a call to ask all members to file ADO forms when you have issues with your assignment to protect your practice and license. It is up to you to report and follow up on resolution. DCNA is looking at using these forms to begin collective action to highlight and create solutions to help improve workplace conditions. The form is available on our website (www.dcna.org; click on Resources) and can be faxed [(202)362-8285] to the office or emailed to dthomas@dcna.org.

DCNA Leaders & Women's March in DC

DCNA leaders Brenda King and Margaret Shanks marched in Washington, DC on January 19th, joining thousands of union activists to stand up against sexism, bigotry, union-busting and other issues that seek to divide our country. Ms. King is a member of the DCNA Board of Directors. Ms. Shanks serves as the DCNA Chief Shop Steward at Children's Hospital and also as a Vice President for DCNA's national union, National Nurses United.



DCNA to Discuss Workplace Violence at DC Council

On January 28th, DCNA/DBH leaders, Tinuola Shokunbi and Susan Nelson wrote to DC Councilmember Vincent Gray advising him once again of DCNA's "grave concerns regarding the violence against the staff at St. Elizabeths Hospital." Ms. Shokunbi and Ms. Nelson also described a recent patient assault on a DCNA member resulting in broken ribs and other injuries, stating that "this assault has added to the already high anxiety levels of our members." You can read the letter on DCNA's website at www.dcna.org. DCNA will testify at the DBH Oversight Hearing at the DC Council on February 12th, commencing at 10:00 am. We ask all of our members to try to attend this important hearing in solidarity of our members at St. Elizabeths Hospital and to highlight the issues of workplace violence.

Upcoming Events

DC Council Oversight Hearing – Dept. of Behavioral Health, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 500, Tuesday February 12th, commencing at 10:00 am. See article above. If you want to join the effort to combat workplace violence in health care institutions, please join us at this hearing. You may contact Walakewon Blegay at wblegay@dcna.org, for further details.

DCNA Board of Directors' & E&GW Cabinet Meeting, 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20016, Tuesday, February 19th, commencing at 5:30 pm. These meetings are open to all DCNA members. If you plan on attending, please contact Ms. Vickie Spence at vspence@dcna.org.

Labor Relations Training, DCNA, 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20016, March 20th, 5pm to 8pm. DCNA will be conducting training on investigating and processing grievances and other representational matters. Please contact Ms. Vickie Spence at vspence@dcna.org or Walakewon Blegay, Esq. at wblegay@dcna.org to register for the training.



Please visit DCNA on our website at www.dcna.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DCNursesAssociation.

For Assignment Despite Objection and Grievance forms, visit www.dcna.org.

DCNA is located at 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20016. Telephone – (202) 244-2705