

DCNA Together – Making a Difference in DC

October 2018



Negotiations Update:

Tentative Settlement Reached in the Howard University/Howard University Hospital Negotiations

After lengthy bargaining sessions taking the parties into the night on both October 23 and 25, DCNA and HU/HUH reached tentative agreement on the successor collective bargaining agreement. The tentative agreement is subject to ratification by the DCNA/HU-HUH membership of approximately 400 nurses, dietitians, pharmacists and social workers. The membership was able to show solidarity by signing a petition seeking a fair and less punitive attendance policy, wearing t-shirts in non-patient care areas and coming to the DCNA office to voice concerns.



11L-R – Kimeera Rao, Mulu Mengestab, Valesay Cherie, Eileen Shaw, Edward Smith, Janis Bashorun, Jacqueline Lewis, Akini Lafortune, Ekata Awewoh.

Over a three year period, the average base salary for DCNA members will increase by 11.75%. Of special note, DCNA was able to convince management to withdraw its proposal to tie any wage increases to patient satisfaction scores as determined by surveys put out by Press Ganey, a company that has monopolized the industry. DCNA also bargained for and reached agreement to provide premium pay for nurses who perform preceptor duties (\$2.00 per hour) and charge nurse duties (\$3.00 per hour). Eileen Shaw, Chairperson, DCNA/HU-HUH bargaining unit, stated that “this contract has financial gains for every one of our members and importantly, we were able to ensure fair working conditions. I am proud of the hard work and many hours put in by our bargaining team and grateful that we can present a good contract to our membership.”

DCNA was also successful in its goal of making the attendance policy less punitive and more flexible. Members advised that the policy created an environment in which they report to work with an illness in order to avoid disciplinary action. Moreover, employees receive marks or “occurrences” leading to discipline even if they are late one or two minutes. They also receive a mark leading to discipline if they are unable to work due to an emergency or a verified illness. Agreed upon changes to the policy address those issues by ensuring that employees with documented medical conditions will not receive occurrences and infrequent and short periods of lateness (3 minutes or less) will be excused under the new contract.

DBH and Compensation Unit 13

On November 1st, Walakewon Blegay, Esq., Staff Attorney for DCNA, announced that DCNA and the District of Columbia reached tentative agreements to settle compensation agreements for the Department of Behavioral Health and Compensation Unit 13. Prior to reaching the settlement, Attorney Blegay and DCNA leaders previously reached impasse and appeared before Arbitrator David Vaughn over the course of five impasse hearings.



Chinyere Otuya, Shop Steward DDS; Gloria McCants, Shop Steward CFSA; Judy Poole, Shop Steward DOC; and Tracy Spann-Downing, Shop Steward Health Care Finance).

The settlement agreement, signed by Arbitrator Vaughn provides that nurses in DBH and Comp 13 will receive a 3% raise in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 2% in FY2019, an additional one-time payment 0.5% of the 2019 annual salaries in August 2020 and a 3% raise in FY2020. Nurses also will receive \$50 monthly Metro benefits. DBH nurses will receive 8 hours for mental health day.

(Photo: from left to right: DCNA Compensation Unit Bargaining Team - Attorney Blegay; Robbin Rowe, Shop Steward Health Care Finance Agency;

“The process was long and challenging, but we worked collaboratively with representatives from over six District agencies to ensure that we made the best deal for our members; nurses who work hard every day for the residents of the District of Columbia,” stated Judy Poole, DCNA Representative for Department of Corrections. The Mayor must now submit the Agreement to the DC Council, which is expected to approve the contract.

DCNA Testifies at DC Council on Issues at Providence Hospital & United Medical Center



On October 10th, DCNA member Pricilla Wambo (photo at left) testified about the consequences on the rest of the healthcare community if Providence Hospital shuts its doors this December, as announced and reported. Ms. Wambo currently works in the Emergency Department at United Medical Center and has also been employed as a Registered Nurse at Howard University Hospital, Washington Hospital Center and Providence Hospital. She testified about current problems she faces as an ER nurse: “nurse staffing shortages have contributed to lengthy waiting periods for patients seeking medical care in the Emergency Department. Currently, delays in providing care remain significant. Often, patients who are transported by ambulance wait for several hours prior to being admitted in the Emergency Department. Moreover, patients can wait for over twenty-four hours to be transferred to a bed in another unit after receiving care in the Emergency Department.” She further testified about the effects of a closure of Providence: “I am convinced as difficult as it is to perform my job now, with the lack of adequate resources, ancillary staff and registered nurses, I cannot even imagine the additional burden on my ability to provide competent care to patients at UMC. I urge the DC Council to treat the announced closure of Providence Hospital as the health care emergency it is.”

DCNA also testified before the DC Council on October 26th for the hearing on the East End Health Equity Act of 2018, legislation that expedites the process to build a new hospital on the St. Elizabeth Campus. The Act contains no provisions to ensure that the nurses employed at United Medical Center (UMC) will continue their commitment to improving the health of the Wards 7 and 8 residents. The Legislation and the Letter of Intent does not include any provisions to ensure that UMC nurses will maintain their jobs, collective bargaining agreement, salaries, benefits and seniority at the new hospital which is proposed to be operated by George Washington Hospital. UMC Nurses, Roberta LeNoir and Jane Link, testified about their over 30 years of commitment to the Hospital through two bankruptcies and bad management; they remarked that nurses who have committed their careers to Ward 7 and 8 should not be left behind at the new hospital. (Photo: from left to right: DCNA Staff Attorney Wala Blegay; UMC Nurse Roberta LeNoir and DCNA Organizer Deborah Thomas.)



Upcoming Events

DCNA Board of Directors & E&GW Cabinet Meeting, 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20016, Tuesday, November 20th, 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.

DCNA Annual Membership Meeting, Camelot by Martin's, 13901 Central Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774, Thursday, December 13th commencing at 6:30 pm. Dinner will be served and there will be a silent auction and music. DCNA is also providing an education class, beginning at 5:30pm. If you wish to attend the meeting and/or the class, please make sure to register no later than November 19th. Contact Ms. Vickie Spence at vspence@dcna.org with any questions.

Labor Relations Training, DCNA, 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20016, January 16th, 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.

Ed. Note: Due to the voluminous amount of news and activity, DCNA will publish a Special Edition Newsletter later this month.

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