

# DCNA Together – Making a Difference in DC

April/May 2026



## Contract Negotiations

### George Washington University Hospital

DCNA and UHS met at the bargaining table on May 20 & 21. Yet again, UHS failed to make any proposal on wages, benefits and other compensation.

- UHS proposes to change per diem workers to work 1 shift/ week - a change from the grandfathered contracts and current hospital policy, DNCA wants to allow per diem RNs to maintain the policy of not having to work every week.
- DCNA continues to reject a UHS proposal to deny any PTO requests from November 15 - January - each year. It is hard enough to get leave as it is.
- DCNA proposes no changes in your shift hours or day/night/rotating schedule (unless you apply for another position). UHS wants the right to change your schedule any time.
- DCNA wants to make sure you and your union representative are on paid time during grievance meetings. UHS does not want to pay you if you file a grievance when management violates your contractual rights and a meeting scheduled on your non-work time.
- DCNA will not give up contract language that would require a lessee or new owner in case of a sale of a part of all of the hospital to continue to take on the obligations of the union contract.



## Dept. of Behavioral Health

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, DCNA filed automatic impasse with the DC Public Employee Relations Board (PERB). Despite numerous requests to meet and negotiate over proposals initially submitted by DCNA in May 2025, the DBH has repeatedly refused to bargain. DCNA and DBH met with a mediator on May 11<sup>th</sup> and the District had no proposals to submit. We have scheduled one more mediation session on June 12<sup>th</sup>. Absent agreement, an arbitrator will preside over a hearing to issue a binding award on all compensation issues.

## Compensation Unit 13

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, DCNA submitted our initial compensation proposals to management and requested dates to commence bargaining. Should the DC Government refuse to schedule dates and submit its proposals, DCNA will follow the path we set for bargaining with the Department of Behavioral Health. The plan will be to file automatic impasse and proceed to mediation and a possible hearing, termed "Interest Arbitration," in our efforts to win a contract for nurses throughout the DC Government.

## DCNA Endorses Wala Blegay & Janeese Lewis George



The District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) is proud to announce its endorsement of **Wala Blegay** for the United States Congress. Wala Blegay has been a strong and consistent advocate for nurses, healthcare workers, and the communities they serve. Throughout her career in public service, she has demonstrated a deep commitment to strengthening healthcare systems, improving working conditions for frontline healthcare professionals, and expanding access to quality care.

“Nurses understand the importance of leadership that listens to healthcare workers and prioritizes patient safety,” said DCNA leadership. “Wala Blegay has stood alongside nurses and working families and has shown a clear commitment to policies that strengthen healthcare and protect those on the frontlines.”

As healthcare systems across the region continue to face workforce shortages and increasing patient care demands, DCNA believes strong representation in Congress is essential to advancing policies that support safe staffing, fair labor practices, and equitable healthcare access.

Councilmember **Janeese Lewis George** met with DCNA leadership and addressed critical concerns including workplace violence, safe staffing, nurse-to-patient ratios, school nurse protections, collective bargaining rights, and accountability within District health agencies. She articulated a clear vision for governing in partnership with labor and elevating the voices of frontline healthcare workers.



“DC nurses are on the frontlines every single day—keeping patients safe in environments that are increasingly strained, understaffed, and at times unsafe,” said Nancy Boyd, President of DCNA. “We need a Mayor who doesn’t just acknowledge those challenges, but is prepared to act on them. Councilmember Janeese Lewis George demonstrated a clear commitment to workplace violence protections, safe staffing, and restoring respect for collective bargaining. She understands that nurses must be at the table—not shut out of the decisions that impact our patients and our profession.”

The District of Columbia Nurses Association is proud to endorse Janeese Lewis George for Mayor and calls on its members and the broader community to support leadership that prioritizes care, safety, and working families.

## DCNA Wins Elections for Nurses

**Anacostia Clinic – Children’s Hospital.** On March 4<sup>th</sup>, DCNA filed a representation petition seeking an election for five RNs working at the Anacostia Clinic (Children’s Hospital). On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, nurses voted YES to the union.

**Per Diem RNs – Howard University Hospital.** On April 1<sup>st</sup>, DCNA filed a representation petition seeking an election for per diem nurses working at Howard University Hospital. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the PRN voted YES to the union. DCNA will be meeting with per diem nurses in the near future to go over the collective bargaining agreement and prepare proposals for negotiations.

## DCNA Wins Golden Picket Award



On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Metro Labor Council, AFL-CIO presented DCNA with the prestigious Golden Picket Award. This award recognizes a local union that has turned out the most members for mobilization, protest, or campaign for better pay and working conditions.

Nurses at St. Elizabeths Hospital and the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program have endured workplace violence, chronic understaffing, unsafe infrastructure, and inadequate equipment for years, if not decades.

Despite sustained advocacy on behalf of both patients and staff, meaningful, system-level change has remained elusive. The District of Columbia Department of Behavioral Health has too often operated in a reactive posture, falling short of its obligation to ensure a safe, therapeutic environment for care delivery to some of the

District’s most vulnerable residents.

In 2025, DC Nurses Association/DBH nurses elevated their advocacy with urgency and precision. Moving beyond internal escalation, they organized, documented systemic failures, and brought their frontline experiences directly to policymakers. In coordinated efforts, nurses testified before the DC Council, drawing the focused attention of leadership, including Christina Henderson, Chair of the Committee on Health.



This advocacy marked a turning point. For the first time, the District government initiated consistent, structured engagement with DCNA/DBH nurses including standing monthly meetings with the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services to directly address long-standing workplace safety and patient care issues. While these steps represent measurable progress, the pace and scale of change remain misaligned with the urgency of conditions on the ground.

Even so, DBH nurses remain steadfast. Their work is grounded not only in clinical expertise, but in an unwavering commitment to dignity, safety, and accountability in behavioral health care.

DCNA/DBH is deeply honored to accept recognition from the Metro Labor Council an acknowledgment not just of perseverance, but of principled advocacy in the face of systemic challenges.

The work continues. On April 20, DCNA/DBH nurses will

once again stand before the DC Council to demand the safe, resourced, and therapeutic care environment that both patients and healthcare workers deserve.

This has been the third time since 2018 in which the MLC, AFL-CIO has honored DCNA with an award.

## DCNA Needy Nurses Fund

Did you know that DCNA has a fund specifically set up to help members in need of financial assistance? Since the early 2000s, DCNA has provided assistance to nurses and licensed health care workers who have struggled financially. We ask that you help keep this fund maintained. To donate, please contact Ms. Mary Jones Bryant at [tall50leo50@hotmail.com](mailto:tall50leo50@hotmail.com).

### About a Nurse



*"You just can't get used to actually being on vacation, can you?"*

Please visit DCNA on our website at [www.dena.org](http://www.dena.org) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/DCNursesAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/DCNursesAssociation).

For Assignment Despite Objection and Grievance forms, visit [www.dena.org](http://www.dena.org).

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