

# DCNA Together – Making a Difference in DC

September 2014



## DCNA Hires Staff Attorney/Labor Specialist

The District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) has appointed Walakewon Blegay, Esq., to the position of Staff Attorney/Labor Specialist. Attorney Blegay is a graduate of the American University Washington School of Law and previously worked for the National Labor Relations Board as an Attorney Advisor. Ms. Blegay is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the State of Maryland ACLU.



## Help DCNA Fight the District's Closure of Healthy Start

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the District notified DCNA that because the Federal Government decided against awarding a grant to the Department of Health for its Healthy Start Program, it would close the program. Healthy Start's purpose is to improve perinatal outcomes for high risk pregnant women and mothers and to improve the health and development of infants. In 1991, the District had one of the worst infant mortality rates in the United States. The District's overall infant mortality rate was 21 deaths per 1000 live births. By 2011, because of the work of DCNA registered nurses and other health care workers, the infant mortality rate fell to 7.4. Nurses increased home visits in low socioeconomic areas of the District, especially wards 7 and 8. The number of home health visits to wards 7 and 8 in a three year period, nearly doubled, from 4,392 in 2007, to 8,712 in 2010, achieving great success in lowering the mortality rate.

Mayor Gray recently applauded the city's falling infant mortality rate, stating that "[i]t is encouraging to see the continued decline in infant mortality in the District, and I am confident that as we continue making long-term health investments for the city's most vulnerable populations, we will continue to see improvements in many health indicators." Yet, clearly, he decided against using District money to keep this program open, despite the city's incredible revenue growth and available cash.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Joxel Garcia, Director for the DOH informed DCNA that funding for the Healthy Start Program **will end on December 26<sup>th</sup>**. He advised that the city will do its best to find placement for the nurses, but made no promises. District officials have not stated what will happen to the services provided to at-risk women and children that are currently performed by our own registered nurses.

The city needs to fund this invaluable program because the declining infant mortality rates were the result of long-term investments to help vulnerable mothers and children survive and prosper.

DCNA asks that you get involved **now** to stop this tragic decision to close Healthy Start. To get involved, please email Ms. Brenda King ([bking@dcna.org](mailto:bking@dcna.org)) or Walakewon Blegay ([wblegay@dcna.org](mailto:wblegay@dcna.org)). Ms. King and Ms. Blegay will have information on DCNA's action plan to Save Healthy Start.

We have very little time to convince the DC Council to keep Healthy Start afloat. *Help save this Program now.*



DCNA discusses Healthy Start with Mayor Gray (9/26/14)

## Children's National Medical Center

In the recent negotiations with the hospital the DCNA negotiating team was able to obtain 20 new permanent onsite parking slots for DCNA members. The slots are now being filled based on seniority dates and all parties are very excited about this win. What is also exciting is that if any of these 20 people end employment with CNMC we can replace them with another DCNA member.

## Compensation Unit 13 Election

DCNA represents registered nurses in various agencies in the Government of the District of Columbia, including the Child and Family Services Agency, the Department on Disabilities, the Department of Health, the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, the Health Care Finance Agency and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer. The bargaining unit is known as Compensation Unit 13. DCNA is overseeing elections for new leaders in the bargaining unit. The election will be held on October 6 & 7 at the Department of Health, 899 North Capitol Street, NE, 2d Floor, Room 216, Washington, DC 20001 (10/6, between 10a.m. and 3:00 p.m.), the Child and Family Services Agency, 200 I Street, SE, Room 2658, Washington, DC 20003 (10/7, between 10a.m. and 2:00 p.m.) and via absentee ballot for those members who are unable to vote at either location. The open offices are President, Vice President, Secretary and Chief Shop Steward.

## American Diabetes Association – Tour de Cure

Colette Goldston (Comp Unit 13), Nancy Massay (Dept. of VA) and Agnes Addington (Howard Univ. Hosp.) all volunteered to assist at rest stops for the ADA Tour de Cure held on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The event was a bike tour throughout DC to raise funds for diabetes awareness. DCNA thanks these DCNA members for their participation in this worthwhile event.

## Events

**HIV CME Dinner Lecture on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm.** - Veronica D. Jenkins, MD, Medical Director, Family and Medical Counseling Service, Washington, DC, Caring for Communities of Color with HIV Infection.

**SAVE the Date: DCNA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2014 from 6:30 pm – 10:30 pm.** The Annual Meeting will be held at Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive; Greenbelt, MD. DCNA conducts its elections for officers and will hold its annual Silent Auction to benefit the DCNA Needy Nurses Fund. Dinner, of course, is provided. Registration information will be forthcoming.

**DC Board of Nursing – DC Nurse** - If you did not receive a copy of the publication, please contact the DC Board of Nursing [(877) 672-2174] to provide your email address. There is important information about license renewals in this issue.

## Where Is Your Mind? Brittani Haynes MSN/INF, RN

Have you lost your sanity? Do you feel overwhelmed? Have you wondered can I do this anymore? If you answered yes to any of these, then it is time for you to take a step back, and let's process something. If you lost your sanity, I hope you find it quickly. Take some time out for yourself. Take time to de-stress from all the stressors in your life. Recognize you have a purpose. You might be tired and it is time for you to rest, relax, restore, and rewire.

If you feel overwhelmed, the question is what are you overwhelmed about? Can you change the situation that is overwhelming you? We all get overwhelmed but we all handle it differently. What are some ways to decrease your stressors at work? Take a moment for yourself. Go to the bathroom, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and speak that everything is going to work out. Then come back to your desk and write out what you need to accomplish today. Work from the beginning of the list and knock off one thing at a time. You can also make this list at the beginning of each day, or to do a list at the end of the day for the next day.

Finally, have you wondered if you can do this anymore? There are times we all asked ourselves this question. You have to reflect on your why. Your why is what motivates you, what keeps you going, what impact do you want to make, etc. Your why is what wakes you up in the morning. If you have nothing that motivates, that gets you excited, or puts a smile on your face, then, maybe it is time for a change. If, however, you have the passion and excitement, then it is time to keep pushing. Keep making that impact. Keep changing lives. Be that role model that you are.

We all have our down days. We all have great days. Every day we wake up with another chance to fulfill our purpose. Don't let situations stress you out and keep you from doing what you love. What we have in our minds and hearts is precious. Nobody will see the world like you do. Take care of yourself, and don't burn yourself out. Remember it is okay to put your needs first. You work hard every day, but don't forget to enjoy life. Keep your stress levels down, don't let things get you overwhelmed, and don't lose your sanity. You work hard for your career. Your mind, body, and soul are what make you unique. Cherish it, and protect it!

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

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