



16 July 2012

Dear SPNN Colleague,

We have been noting an alarming trend in discipline related to Meals and Breaks. As you may remember, Meals and Breaks was an area of focus in our last contract negotiations. Our discussions centered around the inability of nursing staff to receive timely breaks. We were able to achieve an improvement for 12 hour staff regarding timing for the meal break, from 10 hours to eight. The agreement recognized that **qualified** staff must be available to provide the coverage and adequate notice given for timing of the break. Despite our long discussions and agreement, many Bargaining Unit staff continue to have difficulty taking a meal or break and are being penalized for charging for the NMB (no meal break), as is provided by **law**.

We are taking all available measures to address this issue. But here are our recommendations regarding steps you can take:

- Request the time for your meal and break early in the shift
- DO NOT take your work cell phone on your break
- If you are unable to take your scheduled meal/break related to patient condition/needs/demands, let your manager or lead know
- If you do not want to take your meal/break within the legal time (5 hours for 8 hour staff, 8 hours for 12 hour staff) due to your own preference, do not charge for a NMB
- If you are threatened or intimidated, please call a union rep ASAP

The response we are receiving from management regarding this issue is that there must be a problem with the **NURSE** if meals/breaks are not being taken! We find this assertion ridiculous and punitive.

Please take care of yourselves; take your breaks. You are providing needed care to sicker and sicker patients. There is an abundance of research supporting that tired, overwhelmed nurses make more mistakes. We are Sharp nurses and know how much you care, how hard you work and that hospitals would not exist without nurses.

In Unity,

Your SPNN Officers

5030 Camino de la Siesta
Suite 306
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 280-5401