



Pettis Memorial Registered Nurses Association

PMRNA Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2015

THE ROAD SO FAR

- **January: CAT Team Sign-ups**
- **February 17: Negotiation Team Elections**
- **February: Management Notified of Union's Intent to Bargain.**
- **Negotiation Dates TBA**

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Letter from the President

I am Mary Mendoza, President of PMRNA since April 2011. I started my employment at VA Loma Linda in the Intensive Care Unit in April 2005. I have 16 years of nursing experience and am a nationally certified Critical Care RN.

I obtained an Associate Degree in Nursing from Pasadena City College and a BSN and a MSN, Ed degrees from University of Phoenix.

Nurses are essential to health care; yet, we often underestimate our ability to improve working conditions that impact the delivery of health care. The majority would rather silence their voices than risk being heard. Can you imagine health care without nurses? Neither can I. Our capacity to influence change can often be accomplished when **WE** are a united front. When I experienced firsthand the power

of solidarity, I became actively involved with our Union. I chose to be a voice of reason and change.



“Collectively, we can break barriers, overcome challenges, and accomplish so much more.”

The Gallup Poll ranked nursing as the most trusted profession for 13 consecutive years. Nurses are skilled professionals in high demand with colossal value in health care. United, our influence in various aspects of

health care is immense. Collectively, we can overcome challenges, break barriers, and effect change. **WE** must embark on these journeys together. Allow change to occur, but not by chance.

Contract negotiations, a historical milestone for PMRNA, are on the horizon. Ratification of the new contract will be determined by votes of dues-paying members. Your voice matters. Join the Union and get involved. Do not suppress your voices when it matters the most. Martin Luther King, Jr. profoundly stated, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Join, vote, and be heard!

In unity,
Mary Mendoza, MSN, Ed, RN,
CCRN
President, PMRNA

HELP WANTED: StaRNs/CAT TEAM

Do people in your department view you as a leader both in patient care standards and union involvement?

Are you someone who would like to get involved but don't know how?

Well, your union is looking for a few select individuals to help us connect with our members. We are looking for qualified RNs that

will serve as their units' eyes and ears and be the conduit of information between our members and PMRNA officers.

In essence, StaRNs/CAT team members are spokespeople for members in their respective units.

Negotiations will be here sooner than you think and we need help gathering information from you, the members, to ensure

everyone's voice is heard. If you believe you are one of these leaders that can provide this basic support structure within your unit, then please sign up. You can contact one of your officers or Staff Representative. Postcards will also be sent out.

Change will not come with a small few but a mass in numbers.

There is no Union without U!

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!!!

There's no
SUCCESS
without "U"

"Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning."
Maya Angelou

Driving Your Union

Having a union enables you to have a voice in the workplace. It gives you a mechanism to address a variety of issues within the workplace, like safety issues, unfair working conditions or scheduling problems. The list can go on and on. To ensure that your interests and concerns are addressed, it is your responsibility to be active and vocal in your union. You, the member, steer its direction. This is the way to achieve a successful and strong union.

So when you ask, "What has my union done for me?" what you should be asking is, "What can I do to make my union stronger?" The most important thing to realize is that YOU are the union. A union is only as strong, effective and powerful as the members who participate in its activities. Only members drive a union's success, and every member can take a number of steps to do this. These steps include:

1. Knowing your contract
 2. Attending General Membership/Upcoming Negotiations
 3. Going to your officers and asking questions
 4. Reading your emails, flyers, and newsletters
 5. Signing up for text blasts
 6. Filling out surveys
- You are the union and by engaging in some or all of these activities, you can guarantee that your union is successful in representing your interests.

Enforcing Your CBA

Your collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is a written guarantee backed by federal law involving every aspect of your work life including practice issues, vacations and leave, hours of work, and much more. Any time there is a violation of this agreement a grievance should be filed.

Filing a grievance is key to enforcing your contractual

rights. It provides a mechanism for responding to management's misinterpretation of the contract or unfair discipline. A grievance can also be filed over incorrect application of the hospital's policies, violations of state and federal law, or violations of binding past practices which may exist in the workplace.

One of the grievances filed last

year regarding violation of past practice dealt with work schedules. Management wanted to change the process of self-scheduling. Nurses were vocal and voiced their concerns regarding the new scheduling program. Because of these nurses, the union was able to restore past practice.

Know your rights by knowing your contract.

The Story Behind Weingarten

As a union member, you have a right to have union representation at any interview or meeting that could lead to disciplinary action against you. The 1975 Supreme Court case of *National Labor Relations Board v. Weingarten* established this basic entitlement and the procedures for when and how union reps may participate in interviews. These rules are referred to as "Weingarten rights."

The actual lawsuit that led to the establishment of Weingarten rights involved an employee at a

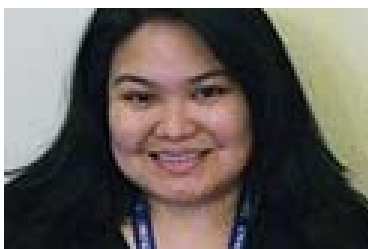
lunch counter. Laura Collins was accused of stealing and was then interviewed by the store manager and a loss prevention specialist.

The company believed Collins had taken a large box of chicken but paid only for a small box. Collins said she took only four pieces of chicken – the amount customers receive in a small box – but had to put it in a large box because the store was out of small boxes. Her story checked out, and Collins was cleared.

From these humble facts,

Weingarten rights were born. During the interview, Collins asked several times for her union rep or shop steward, but the company wouldn't grant her request. Although management asked Collins to keep the interview to herself, Collins told her shop steward about it and the union filed an unfair labor practice charge against the company. Ultimately, the Supreme Court decided that an employee is entitled to union representation for investigatory interviews.

A Message From Your VP



Hi, my name is Michelle Lanorias. I have been a nurse for nine years. I started out as a LVN on 4NW and have been a Registered Nurse in ICU for 7 1/2 years. I became involved in the union because of constant changes in working conditions and my need to communicate the concerns that

“Getting involved & becoming active is a vital part of our union.” would arise whenever a new manager tried to make changes. And it was my fellow co-workers who suffered every time changes were made without our input or feedback. My mother was one of the first people to talk to me about unions and what they do for workers. She taught me how nurses are heard when they have a union.

I think becoming an active member not only benefits you but also the patients, our veterans. Stepping up

and advocating for the patients, yourself, and others benefits everyone. In order to do this, everyone needs to know their contract so that everyone knows their rights.

Getting involved or becoming active is a vital part of our union. A union's backbone is its members. Your union is strong when its members are active and informed. As nurses, we are the front line. We see firsthand what our veterans go through and what they need from us. We need to stand up and be **ONE VOICE** so that our voice can be heard. Because in the end, our veterans are the winners.

The Bargaining Team

Your Bargaining Team will consist of eight members: your four officers and four elected members from the bargaining unit. Your elected members are Stacci Abbott, Mike Bolla, Amber Pule, and Michelle Wagner.

This team is very important because they will be your voice at the negotiating table. Your bargaining team will work together to develop contract language and bargaining table strategy. They will also keep

members informed by utilizing the CAT Team to inform you on the progress of negotiations. All of their efforts will be aimed at providing members with improved working conditions and a safe and fair working environment.

The Bargaining Team is in the process of developing and modifying contract proposals. Together, they will use information obtained from the bargaining surveys to prioritize member issues. The survey will let us

know what issues are most important to you. If you didn't fill a survey out, it's not too late to let your voice be heard. Your officers will be conducting general membership meetings monthly.

Once we have dates for negotiations, we will notify you through flyers, emails and text blasts. If you haven't signed up for text blast, it's not too late. It's fast and easy, and it will help us keep you informed.

**TEXT PETTIS
TO 411247 TO
SIGN UP FOR
MOBILE
ALERTS**

Your New Association Representative Coordinator

My name is Carla Herring. I am a mother of three children. I enjoy traveling, meeting new people and community service. Nursing is, and has always been, my passion. I firmly believe that my purpose in life is to service others.

I've been an employee at Pettis for the past 17 years in various capacities. Serving veterans who have served this country has been a blessing for me in so many ways. It allows me to show my appreciation

for what these courageous men and women have done for our country. I have worked in ambulatory care, critical care, palliative care and most recently 3SE.

Becoming an officer has been a natural progression for me as I'm committed to helping my coworkers get the fair chance they deserve. I also want them to be treated with dignity and compassion.

Every day on the job, we advocate for our patients. Nurses need

someone to advocate for them. In addition to caring for our veterans, we must also care for each other.

My goal is to do the best I can as an Association Representative Coordinator. I am here for each and every nurse.



“Every day on the job we advocate for our patients. Nurses need someone to advocate for them.”



PMRNA OFFICERS

President: Mary Mendoza
Vice President: Michelle Lanorias
Secretary: (open position)
Treasurer: Eva Kummerfeld
Association Rep. Coordinator: Carla Herring

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To stay informed, sign up for **TEXT BLASTS!**
Text **PETTIS** to 411247

In 1980, Pettis Memorial nurses voted to join UNAC. We can only wonder about their struggles and all they had to go through to get there. Today, all of those nurses have either moved on or retired and with them, the reasons and sacrifices of their fight. We may not know their reasons but we know their fight—their fight for better working conditions, safe patient care and respect for their profession. That theme hasn't changed. We, as nurses, must continue that fight. It is up to us to make sure that we advocate for our patients, our co-workers and our profession.

It has been over three decades since our contract was last ratified and now, in 2015, we (your officers) have set the wheels in motion to change that. We want to hear every voice and we are committed to doing whatever we can to make sure your concerns are addressed. But we can't do this alone. We need you now more than ever. We cannot make positive and significant changes without your participation. Your voice matters more than you think.

Your voice counts. It's what keeps our union strong and effective. Get involved by staying informed. Come out to General Membership, read the flyers, sign up for text blasts, and check your emails for updates. We all know knowledge is power so take the opportunity to get reacquainted with your current collective bargaining agreement (CBA). We want to hear from all of you. Our goal is to obtain concerns of the majority.

Help your union become a success and **GET INVOLVED!**

THERE'S NO SUCCESS WITHOUT U!

Healing Arts Board

UNAC/UHCP provides multiple benefits to its members in a variety of ways. One of those ways is the Healing Arts Board representation. It is a legal representation expense reimbursement program. This reimbursement program applies to legal fees incurred by attorneys referred by the UNAC/UHCP Legal Department. It is only available on one occasion per member. The program reimburses a member up to \$5000 for legal expenses incurred as a result of a formal BRN accusation, investigation notice or formal settlement discussion and/or agreement. If for any reason you find yourself in need of these services you here is what you need to know in order to qualify for reimbursement:

1. You must complete an application.

2. You must be a UNAC/UHCP member at the time of the events underlying the Healing Arts Board's allegations, as well as at the time of the reimbursement application.
3. The written application should precede incurring the expense, but must be received in the



UNAC/UHCP gives a helping hand to its members in a variety of ways.

UNAC/UHCP Legal Department within 90 days of incurring expense.

4. You must also use the attorneys referred by UNAC's Legal Department.

UNAC/UHCP does not provide any representation or reimbursement for legal expenses associated with representation on worker's compensation, medical malpractice, state unemployment insurance or disability benefits dispute, or other personal matters unrelated to a right covered in your collective bargaining agreement.

If you have any questions or need an application, contact one of your PMRNA officers for assistance.