



COUNCIL ALERT



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MERITER NURSES' COUNCIL
SEIU HEALTHCARE DISTRICT 1199WI, UNITED FOR QUALITY CARE

Mandatory Overtime—On to Arbitration

By Mary Malaney, RN, 4E

Despite valiant efforts by our Nurses' Council and our Union members on the Mandatory Overtime Committee, we have been unable to get management to budge on resolving the issue of mandates. As a result, our Union has not been able to resolve the grievance regarding mandating of RNs after the September 1, 2006 deadline at Meriter.

The Nurses' Council decided that our only recourse is to move the grievance to arbitration and let a neutral arbitrator put pressure on management to resolve the issue. Step one of this process was to move the grievance to the SEIU District 1199 Arbitration Committee for approval. The Arbitration Committee heard our concerns and approved this grievance for arbitration. Since arbitrations are costly, our Union requires oversight by the Arbitration Committee before a grievance can be arbitrated. Kathy Farwell, RN from 3 East, is the Meriter RN representative on the Committee.

The Arbitration process is slow; it could take up to a year for resolution. This is frustrating for all of us, but there is no shortcut.

During the arbitration, both parties [our Union and Meriter] will present their case and an arbitrator [a neutral party] will decide who is right/wins. If we win, the arbitrator will decide the compensation for those who were mandated.

Our contract language is very clear on this issue so we feel good about our prospects going into arbitration. **You must contact our union office to make sure that all of your mandates since September 1, 2006 have been recorded. If you do not do so now and in the future, you will not receive the compensation when the arbitration is resolved.**

NO LUNCH, NO DINNER

By Marian Stokes, RN, 6N

How often do you get interrupted during your meal time? Or not have time for your lunch or dinner? Meal breaks are unpaid time. It is YOUR time.

If you do not get 30 minutes, uninterrupted, with no patient responsibilities, and the ability to leave the unit -- IT IS A **NO LUNCH/DINNER**. **Write it on your time card in the Notes column as no lunch.** You will be paid for the time -- time and a half after 8 hours for 8/80 staff; time and a half after 12 hours for all other staff.

Meal breaks must be at appropriate meal times. You cannot be told to take your lunch at 9am or your dinner at 10pm.

Per your Union contract, you are entitled to a paid 15 minute break for each 4 hours you work -- you cannot claim missed break time on your timecard, like you can for lunch/dinner. SO, TAKE YOUR BREAKS!!!

Time Cards—Legal Documents—Beware!!

By Marian Stokes, RN, 6N

Employees are responsible for filling out their time cards correctly. Write in the time you arrive and the time you leave. You must be accurate. Your time card is a legal record of your work hours. It must be precise. Discrepancies can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for falsification of legal documents and/or stealing money you are not entitled to receive.

Do not guess!! Make sure what you write down is accurate. Hospital management has been comparing ramp clock in/out times to time cards for many employees. Employees have been disciplined and terminated for falsifying their time card. Don't get caught up in this—be accurate.

If you do not get your 30 minute meal, use the note column to write NO LUNCH or NO DINNER. **Do not add 30 minutes to your end time.** Your time on the card must accurately reflect the time you started work and the time you quit. Don't wait until the end of the week to complete—you could end up making a mistake. Complete your card everyday as you come and go. Following this simple rule, can save you a lot of headache (and possibly your job) in the future.

Seniority — Weekends and Holidays

By Marian Stokes, RN, 6N

When you trade shifts or pick up shifts, your seniority goes with you. If there is extra staff scheduled on a weekend, the 25 year staff would have the right to work or the right to be off first. If a senior staff trades to work a holiday as part of her FTE, the senior staff has the right to work or the right to be off first. Follow the chart below for “who gets off?”:

WEEKENDS

25 year staff, in order of seniority
(before anyone floats)
Extra shift staff
Then unit guidelines for LCDs

HOLIDAYS

22+ year staff, in order of seniority
(before anyone floats)
Extra shift staff
Then other staff in order of seniority

IF NO ONE WANTS OFF -- Percs are canceled, then Per Diems are canceled, then the extra shift person is canceled, and then the least senior RN is mandated off for that shift.

ONLY Per Diem and Variable Shift staff are required to take availability call. However, any staff can volunteer to take availability call.

ES Grievance Resolution — Go Union!!

We recently won a grievance regarding managers doing our work in Emergency Services! Over the past several months, the nurse manager and assistant nurse manager had been assigned to work in the charge nurse role in the ES, a role typically filled by a staff nurse. Starting with the next schedule, the scheduled charge nurse will again be a staff nurse. A manager should not be used for routine staffing. Any questions or concerns, call your Union Grievance Representative/Steward listed on the notice on your Union bulletin board.