

# SNA NEWS

Fax: 575-8138

September  
2009

Special points of  
interest:

- Staff Nurses Reject Hospital Wage Freeze Proposal
- Benefit Enrollment
- Health Insurance Benefits 2010
- Coverage for Meal Breaks
- Compassionate Leave
- Time and Attendance Policy
- Seniority Date Correction
- Care Documentation Summary Report
- Acuity/ GRASP

## STAFF NURSES REJECT HOSPITAL WAGE FREEZE PROPOSAL

Thank you to those of you who voted in the special election on August 11.

We had a very good turnout with a large number staff nurses voting. A very few nurses voted to accepted the Hospital's proposal resulting in a 99.4% vote to reject the proposal.

## BENEFIT ENROLLMENT

The Hospital will be transitioning to electronic benefit tracking and processing.

During open enrollment in November all employees will be required to sign up regardless of whether they want to make changes in their benefit coverage. This is necessary in order to be signed in to the electronic benefit program.

Information will be mailed to you from the Hospital regarding your benefits and the process for enrollment.

## HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS 2010

Members of Hospital Administration have informed the SNA Board that medical insurance premiums will not increase for 2010. Therefore, the amounts that Nurses pay each pay period for their contributions to medical insurance will not

## HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS 2010 CONT.....

This is the third year in a row that premiums have not increased.

Dental/ Vision insurance premiums will increase by a few cents per pay period.

There will be no health insurance benefit changes for Nurses for 2010. However, the hospital will be encouraging all employees to use the mail order option for routine prescription drugs.

## COVERAGE OF MEAL BREAKS

The SNA Board has become aware that during some shifts in some departments, Nurses with patient care assignments are “covering” other Nurses, (also with patient care assignments) while those Nurses are on meal breaks.

Because the Nurse covering the Nurse on break, is responsible for the patients assigned to that Nurse, the additional patients mean that **this practice is in violation of Title 22** Nurse/ Patient ratio regulations because the covering Nurse has more than 4 or 5 patients.

As many of you are aware, the ratio regulations were difficult to achieve and are meant to maintain a minimum level of a safe care.

Failure to adhere to the ratio regulations is a “slippery slope” that could result in the erosion of these patient care protections.

Only a Nurse without a patient care assignment (e.g. Lead Nurse), may accept responsibility for another Nurse’s patients, while the Nurse is on a break.

---

## **COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

Over the years, members of the SNA Board and Hospital Administration have discussed the issue of whether the death of a pet/ family animal entitles Nurses to compassionate leave.

For example, during contract negotiations 1988, the members of the Hospital Team adamantly opposed extending compassionate leave to Nurses upon the death of a pet.

Discussions since that time have not caused the SNA Board to conclude that Administration had changed their opinion.

However, it has recently come to our attention that, in fact, members of Administration now believe that compassionate leave should be extended to benefit eligible Nurses who have lost a pet.

We're not certain of when this change occurred and we may have inadvertently advised you incorrectly.

## **TIME AND ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Be advised that the Time and Attendance policy has recently been revised by the Hospital.

It is our understanding that each Nurse is to receive a copy of the new policy.

Note the changes with regard to the use of Edit sheet, the approval required from the Nurse prior to a change in his/her time card and the issue of recording worked time accurately ( addressing issue of continuing to work after "clocking out")

## **SENIORITY DATE CORRECTION**

Members of the Human Resources Department indicate that they are nearly finished with the review of files and correction, if necessary, of Staff Nurse's seniority dates.

Seniority dates can change due to a number of things but most often due to an unpaid leave of absence or unpaid portion of a leave. In that case, the Nurse's seniority date would be adjusted forward for the unpaid portion exceeding 30 days.

---

## **SENIORITY DATE CORRECTION CONT.....**

As indicated in a previous newsletter, it was discovered that HR had not properly adjusted seniority dates for unpaid leaves. Since this discovery, HR personnel have been reviewing records-sometimes by hand- and making the appropriate changes in seniority dates.

You will receive a letter from the Hospital soon that specifies your seniority date. Please check this date carefully against your own records for accuracy. Seniority dates are very important and are used in the event of layoff, recall, vacation preferences and job bidding.

## **CARE DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY REPORT**

The following report was presented to members of Hospital Administration at the Nursing Coordinating Council meeting on 9/18/09.

This report includes the information gleaned from Staff Nurses' documentation of patient care they were unable to complete as of the change in care partner/unit secretary matrices in April.

Included in the report to administration were a number of eloquent accounts by Staff Nurses' of the difficulties and frustrations they encountered while providing patient care. These accounts were taken from the "free text" area of the documentation forms after all identifying data was removed.

The SNA Board remains deeply concerned about Staff Nurses, "ability to provide safe, effective patient care during many shifts. As the report indicates, timely implementation of new orders, timely administration of both routine and prn meds and re-positioning patients every 2 hours are some of the most common aspects of care that are suffering.

\*\*Whereas this report concludes with information as of 8/20/09, we continue to gather information from Care Documentation Forms filed after that date and will periodically update the summary report.\*\*

After discussing this report with members of Administration, the SNA Board will carefully consider with whom else we should discuss the report.

# CARE DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY REPORT

116 total forms filed 4/8/09- 8/20/09

106 filed by Staff Nurses in Med-Surg & telemetry departments

(A few of the 106 are filed from the same shift, by different Nurses)

Staff Nurses indicated the care they were **not able to complete** during the shift by “clicking” on the appropriate criteria. They were free to use the free text area to elaborate.

(See examples).

## Chosen criteria listed in order of prevalence

1. Charting (inadequate or incomplete)	70
2. Delay in implementing new orders	68
3. Timely administration of routine meds	62
4. Turning patients q 2hrs	62
5. Timely administration of prn meds	57
6. Baths	51
7. Supervision of patients in bathroom or on commode	36
8. Adequate observation of patients	32
9. Timely incontinent care	30
10. Ambulation as ordered	28
11. Oral care	24
12. Dressing changes	22
13. Adequate resourcing of LVN	19
14. Foley care	17
15. Patient/Family education	17
16. Adequate resource of float	14
17. Restraint Protocol	10
18. Pulmonary toilet	5
19. Tracheotomy care	4
20. Dysphasia Protocol	1

The SNA Board and Staff Nurses are concerned for patient safety, outcomes, comfort and the implications for patient care and length of stay.

## ACUITY/GRASP

The Acuity Committee is working on revisions to the Workload Tool used by Nurses to score patient acuity.

The tool must be reviewed and revised as needed every year in order to assure it's accuracy. Some revisions will be based on time studies done by committee members. Examples of revisions include changes that capture the increased time required to discharge patients, time required for reports and huddles and time required for charting.

Please continue to inform us of the dates/shifts when the GRASP Utilization %, and verification by the Lead Nurse indicates that additional staff is warranted, but unavailable.

**STAFF NURSES'  
ASSOCIATION**

401A COLLEGE AVE. SANTA  
ROSA, CA 95401

Phone: 575-8853

Fax: 575-8138

E-mail: [snanews@sonic.net](mailto:snanews@sonic.net)

Presorted Standard

US Postage

PAID

Permit #233

Santa Rosa, CA



**SNA**