



# RIH-UNAP Report

RI Hospital United Nurses & Allied Professionals, Local 5098

December 28, 2005

*Message from the President:*

## Looking back and moving ahead



Linda McDonald, RN  
President

The New Year is a time of reflection and planning for the future. This past year has seen some strong

accomplishments. The legislature passed the Staffing Disclosure Bill which will be a beginning into addressing the issue of adequate staffing. Our concept of a Labor/Management Education Trust is now a reality -- addressing our members' desire for more continuing education/CEU programs. The Trust will also be developing opportunities for employees to advance professionally and fill the shortages in many UNAP jobs.

*Campaigning got me out to all floors, units and departments -- meeting new members, talking to old friends, and most importantly, listening to what members feel are the important issues.*

This year was a first for our Union when we negotiated a contract extension. The extension, while controversial to some members, protected our health insurance and other contract

language for three years. We also negotiated good wage increases and established an innovative concept of Union Liaison's to improve communication to all members. (*see inside*)

Early this fall, the Union held Executive Board elections. For the first time in twelve years, there was a contested election for the position of President. This turned out to be a positive experience for me. Campaigning got me out to all floors, units and departments meeting new members, talking to old friends, and most importantly, listening to what members feel are the important issues: what needs to be changed, what our strengths are, but also, and more importantly, what our weaknesses are. I have a renewed commitment and direction for strengthening the Union.

To all members who supported me I want to let you know that I appreciate your support and I promise to continue to move forward on wages, benefits, and improving working conditions. To those of the membership who voiced

### UNAP members to receive health insurance rebate

The UNAP and RI Hospital/Lifespan have reached a tentative agreement to provide a significant refund of health insurance premiums to UNAP members. The rebate is based on a surplus in the Lifespan Health Plan that has resulted from changes in the plan benefit design (e.g., the three-tier prescription plan and mail-order), as well as savings resulting from the Lifespan Health Plan becoming a self-insured plan.

The precise amounts and dates have not yet been finalized, but will be announced very soon. Watch for details!

their concerns and feel we needed a change, I want to assure you that I heard many of your concerns. I learned what issues you feel need to be addressed such as more direct communication on decisions affecting the membership. I hope you will become active in the Union and work with me to help the UNAP become an even stronger and better Union.

The most positive message I received was that members feel proud to be a UNAP member and that the Union supports their needs and protects their rights. I make a New Year's resolution to you all that we will improve communication and visibility.

I wish a Healthy New Year to all of you and your families.

#### NO local dues increase for 2006

The RI Hospital UNAP Executive Council has voted to forego the annual increase in local dues for 2006. This decision was made because the recent contract extension has reduced projected expenses for 2006.

# The Union At Work!

## **On-call**

The Union obtained back pay for an RN and a Respiratory Therapist who were on-call, but were not called in, because their manager blast paged or called in the wrong person.

## **Vacation pay in lieu of time off**

The Union successfully intervened on behalf of a Rad Tech who had been denied his contractual right to cash in vacation hours rather than take time off.

## **Salaried employees**

The Union addressed a violation of Federal labor law affecting exempt (ie, salaried) Case Managers, whose weekly salary was being improperly reduced if they arrived at work late or left early.

## **Termination terminated**

The Union successfully advocated for an RN whose professional judgment in dealing with an extremely challenging patient had put her job at risk.

## **Baylor employee payroll error**

Two Baylor employees who had not been paid their Baylor premium for many weeks received substantial backpay after the Union intervened to correct this payroll error.

## **Time and 1/2 vs. double time**

The Union again clarified that employees who would be paid time and 1/2 should NOT always be given overtime before those who would be paid double time. Our contract DOES allow extra hours to be assigned for straight time before overtime, but all overtime should be distributed equitably by seniority.

## **Holiday scheduling**

The Union worked closely with members and managers to resolve dozens of holiday scheduling conflicts. The Union also persuaded the Hospital to pay time and 1/2 for the last four hours of all twelve-hour shifts worked on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve day.

## **Vacation coverage - PACU, Davol ED**

As a result of an agreement in the recent contract extension, Hospital and Union representatives met to discuss restrictions on finding vacation coverage in the PACU and Davol ED. A tentative agreement has been reached to provide greater flexibility for vacation coverage, subject to review by employees.

## **Floating from Step Down Units**

A negotiated labor-management committee is meeting in an effort to address employee concerns regarding floating from Step Down Units to medical-surgical floors.

## **Improperly mandated**

An employee who was mandated for nearly two hours after having already worked 16 hours consecutive hours received two hours pay as compensation for this contractual violation.

## Liaison Letters



The UNAP recently launched its Labor-Management Liaison program, which enables three UNAP members to spend a total of 40 hours/week in the Hospital as employee advocates. Here are reports from two of the Liaisons:

### **Helene Macedo**

I am very excited about starting my new position as a Labor-Management Liaison. I look forward to using my 20 hours/week to address the many issues in our workplace, as well as to serve on a variety of union-hospital committees.

In recent weeks, I have handled a variety of employee problems. For example, I was able to work with a manager to solve a complicated problem that involved holiday scheduling and seniority rights. I also helped out an employee who had been denied the right to bid on a posted position while on

maternity leave. I also successfully advocated for two employees who were immediately sent home after reporting to work on the day after Thanksgiving because they were not needed. The employees had only been paid their badge time, but after I informed the payroll manager about RI labor law, the employees received three hours pay for reporting to work.

I plan to schedule regular meetings in the areas I represent: OR, PACU, COOP 2, 3 & 4, and Same Day Admit to hear and address the concerns of our members. I can be reached at 330-7912 or [hmacedo@lifespan.org](mailto:hmacedo@lifespan.org).

### **Mikaela Bessette**

I have been working as a Labor-Management Liaison for approximately one month. Through this, I have been able to meet many staff members throughout Hasbro. I have posted my name and contact information on all units so that I may be readily available to Hasbro staff.

So far, my days have been filled with

receiving many phone calls varying from small questions to concerns about possible grievances. I am currently working on meeting all the Hasbro managers to form a communication bond with them. After this, my plan is to set up monthly meetings with staff and management on each unit. Your involvement in these meetings will help me greatly to represent you. Next month, I will also be restarting labor-management meetings in the emergency room in my efforts to improve the E.D.

As a liaison, I will also serve on Hospital committees to represent the concerns of employees. I plan to communicate with you what happens in these meetings and to bring forth any new ideas.

Please continue to contact me for any questions or concerns you may have. I am available at [mbessette2@lifespan.org](mailto:mbessette2@lifespan.org) or at 330-8106.

\* **Note:** The third Liaison will be Charlene Saxe, CT Scan Tech. Charlene will be available to members on Thursdays beginning in January and can be reached at 330-8432.

UNAP and Lifespan agree to health insurance rebate

# Bucking the trends in health insurance

Throughout the country, health insurance costs are putting enormous pressure on the budgets of employers and workers.

A recent survey found that U.S. employers are facing double-digit increases in health care costs in 2006, and are planning to shift more health insurance costs onto their workers.

At RI Hospital, things are going quite a bit better. Nearly three years ago, Lifespan's health insurance became a "self-insured" plan, which means that Blue Cross and United are not making as much money on us as they used to. In addition, direct Union involvement in health plan decisions has also helped to save money. As a result, we have some good news to share:

- **UNAP members will soon be receiving a health insurance rebate** because our health insurance claims were less

than we expected (the exact amounts and date of the rebate have not yet been finalized).

- **Health insurance premiums will only increase by 3% in 2006** (compared to an average of over 10% for employees at most other workplaces),

- **In 2006, employees in Lifespan Blue will no longer have to obtain a referral to see a specialist.**

Union and management representatives meet monthly to discuss ways that we can improve the benefit plan, control costs, and keep our members healthy. If you have a suggestion for how to improve the health insurance plan, please contact the Union to let us know.

## MyHealthAdvocate

Got a problem or question regarding your health insurance? Don't understand your coverage? Tired of being

put on hold? Call MyHealthAdvocate at 401-467-3113 for *free* assistance in dealing with insurance company red tape. This is a FREE service for RI Hospital employees.



## Apply now for a UNAP educational scholarship!

The UNAP is currently accepting applications from members and/or their dependent children for three \$1,000 scholarships for students who are enrolled at least half time in credit classes at degree-granting institutions.

Application forms may be obtained on-line at [www.unap.org](http://www.unap.org), or by contacting the UNAP office. Completed applications must be submitted no later than March 1, 2006.

## What the heck is the

# UNAP/ RI Hospital Health Care Education Trust???



Diane D'Errico  
Executive Director

You probably have seen the flyers. Maybe you have even attended a program (hundreds of employees already have).

The Trust is currently developing a plan to create educational programs and career ladders to support and train entry-level RI Hospital employees, as well as others in the community, who are interested in pursuing a nursing or technical career at RI Hospital.

The new Executive Director of the Trust is Diane D'Errico, who has

previously worked for RI Hospital, Women & Infants, and the Department of Health, and has a wealth of experience in the world of health care, education, and training. Diane will be meeting with many UNAP members and others in the months ahead to design educational programs that meet the needs and interests of our members.

But what exactly is the UNAP/RIH Health Care Education Trust?

The Trust is a non-profit organization established and jointly run by the Union and the Hospital to offer educational programs for UNAP members, as well as for others who aspire to obtain a job that is represented by UNAP.

This past year, the Trust presented five on-site continuing education programs. The Trust will continue to offer CEU programs every other month.

Our next CEU program will be:

## Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms of Violence: The Health Care Provider Perspective

January 26, 2006  
12:30 – 2:30 PM or 4 – 6 PM  
George Auditorium, RI Hospital

A multi-disciplinary panel will provide perspectives from nursing, social work, law enforcement (Special Victims Unit) and community outreach and advocacy.

\*\*Earn continuing education credits from RISNA, ASRT and NASW\*\*



# UNAP Children's Hospital Fund grants wishes for pedi nurses and patients

## UNAP Children's Hospital Fund Wish List

In recent months, the UNAP Children's Hospital Fund created the Wish List Program. Wish List posters were placed on each unit to ask staff what they "wish to purchase" for the children on their floor. Chris Carey, RN, Fund Coordinator, collected the lists and approved purchases of up to \$500 per unit.

Some of the items purchased were "Kiddie Kruser" cars, high chairs; food & cooking supplies such as muffin tins, cooling racks, mixing bowls, spoons and towels; grooming products for nail care and hair care; body wash, deodorant and lotions; entertainment items such as Playstation, TVs and TV stands, DVD players, DVDs, and karaoke machines; board games, toys, books and craft supplies.

In addition, items can be purchased throughout the year and we encourage all pediatric areas to submit requests as needs arise. We look forward to your support and attendance at our annual spring fundraiser in May. Contact the UNAP Office at 831-3647 with any questions or fax your request to 831-3677.

## Everyone wins in UNAP Holiday Raffle

Every holiday season, the Fund holds a raffle in conjunction with our holiday festival at Roger Williams Park Carousel.

Unfortunately, this year the carousel was under renovation so the event was cancelled.

However, the Fund continued on with the annual raffle, obtaining prizes from many local businesses. The pediatric floors also got into the holiday spirit by donating baskets they created themselves. We are happy to have raised \$3,800, of which 100% will go towards purchasing items for our young patients.

Thank you to all who helped by selling, or purchasing, raffle tickets. And, a special thank you to the following nursing floors, staff, businesses, and organizations who donated raffle prizes:

- Alashan Cashmere
- American Automobile Association
- Aqua Life Pet
- Avanti Dezigns
- BJ's Wholesale Club
- Boston Bruins
- Boston Red Sox
- Box Seats Restaurant
- Chelo's Restaurant
- Christian Salon
- MRT Jewelers



- Neath's
- New American Bistro
- Pawtucket Red Sox
- Piette Jewelers
- Providence Bruins
- Ross Simon's Jewelry
- Salon Serenity
- Shaw's Market
- Stop & Shop Market
- Swarovski Crystal
- Sweenors Chocolates
- Trinity Repertory Company

And, gift baskets donated by: PICU, Children's 4, 5 and 6, PACU, Pedi Sedation, Partial Day Hospital, Joanna Costa, and UNAP staff.

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Providence, RI  
Permit No. 2772

RI Hospital United Nurses  
& Allied Professionals, Local 5098  
375 Branch Avenue  
Providence, RI 02904  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

