



# The Flame

Lighting the Way for Quality Health Care

December 2015

## UNAP's Biennial Convention: Organizing and The Patient Safety Act

**Linda McDonald, RN**  
*UNAP President*



### Organizing and The Patient Safety Act Remain Key Priorities

The UNAP 9th Biennial Convention convened at the Omni Hotel Monday, November 2. Following a morning of leadership training the convention focused on conducting Union business with speakers to address current issues.

President, Linda McDonald, stated "Organizing remains a key priority for the UNAP. Our organizing victories stand out as one of our greatest achievements over the past 2 years. While Private sector membership is declining and Public sector members are under attack the UNAP has added almost 700 new members."

"This is the power of the UNAP."



**Fatima registered nurses and newly organized Fatima service employees.**

Linda also stated, "We will continue to meet with non-union workers who are seeking a way to expand their rights and their voice on the job by joining the UNAP. The goal over the next 2 years is to energize our current locals and organize within our Hospitals for greater strength. History has shown what we know instinctively: that if we are not

organized – whether it be at the bargaining table or at the State House – our rights and our interests will be trampled by those who have the power, and who have no desire to share it "With our continuing concern regarding inadequate/unsafe staffing the UNAP will focus on our priority initiative called "The Patient Safety Act" (PSA).

This legislation will set a safe patient limit on the maximum number of patients assigned to a Registered Nurse at one time. Legislation will also be introduced to address the staffing concerns of the non-RN membership.

A key component of both bills is an acuity tool to be developed by both labor and management of each Hospital with guidelines of criteria to be used.



### Convention Highlights

#### Newly Elected Officers of the UNAP

Barbara Crosby, Lynn Blais, Joyce Dion, Liz Furtado, Linda McDonald, Kevin Wilks



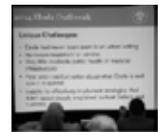
### Presidential Candidate Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders Speaks to the Delegates attending the UNAP Convention.



**Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Director RI Department of Health**



Spoke to the delegates on the resolution " Infectious Disease Preparedness "



### Liz McGrath, BSN, APRN, NP awarded "Clinical Practice Nurse of the Year".

Liz is a UNAP member and a staff nurse on the surgical ICU at Rhode Island Hospital. She also works as a nurse practitioner in private practice and in her spare time she oversees the Mathewson Street Church soup kitchen, as she has for over 30 years.





### **UNAP Local 5051 at HCRS**

2015 marks our 10th year of being a union, since winning our election overwhelmingly in December 2005. From the beginning we faced many challenges. It took us 2 years to settle our first contract. In the first year of our contract we represented 15% of our bargaining unit in grievances and arbitrations. In our 2011 landmark case, the arbitrator determined that HCRS had unlawfully discriminated against a union employee for union activity. HCRS hired a national union busting law firm and spent over half a million dollars to work against us. We had our first victory at the Vermont State House with the help of the UNAP Vermont Council. This bill which passed into law after a dramatic floor fight and which reads in part, "an employer that is the recipient... of state funds shall certify to the state that none of the funds will be used to interfere with or restrain the exercise of an employee's right with respect to unionization..." In 2013, we wrote, advocated for and saw the "Pass Through" Raise legislation become law. Our 2013 3% Pass Through Raise benefited our local and many hard working social service front line union and non union personnel throughout Vermont. In recent times, our labor management relationships at HCRS have become much more friendly. In January 2015 we settled our 4th contract. Our local continues to work together to make a positive difference in the working lives of our members, and also in our professions and for our clients and patients. WE are Union Strong!

### **UNAP, Local 5082, Wins Life Insurance Arbitration**

According to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the UNAP, Local 5082, and Memorial Hospital of RI, the death benefit under the life insurance policy for full time employees is equal to an employee's annual salary. The hospital,

however, bought a policy that called for a reduction in the benefit by up to 50% if the employee died at the age of 70 or older. The union filed a grievance and ultimately went to arbitration claiming that the reduction in benefit was a violation of the CBA. An arbitrator ruled in the Local's favor and ordered the hospital to contact the insurer and amend the policy so the full death benefit would be paid consistent with the CBA without any reduction. The policy has since been amended. Congratulations Local 5082.

### **UNAP, Local 5050, Extends Contract**

The UNAP, Local 5050, at Youth Services in Vermont recently negotiated a one year contract extension. The contract, which was set to expire at midnight on September 30, 2015, was extended through September 30, 2016. Employees will get a 2½% pay increase under the extension while all else will remain status quo. Well done Local 5050.

### **UNAP Local 5008, Care New England (CNE) Declares War on Kent Employees**

In what can only be described as radical, the administration has submitted bargaining proposals that gut the pension plan, delete longevity pay, strip paid time off, cut per diem pay while increasing work requirements and dramatically shift medical insurance costs onto the backs of employees. The proposal nickel and dimes members by cutting charge pay, on call pay and a host of other items. In addition, the employer is attempting to roll back long standing work rules. The Union has rebuilt its unit rep structure in preparation of the coming battle. The leadership of the Union has made it clear to management that they will fight for their hard earned pay, benefits and rights.

Once again our Union witnesses a large corporate structure Care New England full of executives that has abdicated its responsibility to over priced out of town consultants. The consultants have come up with the ingenious idea that they can save tens of millions of dollars by ripping off their employees.

**How?** By cutting their pension, time off, medical insurance and pay.

### **UNAP Local 5109 Copley Hospital Settles Contract Extension**

Nurses belonging to UNAP Local 5109 settled a two year contract extension in advance of the May 29, 2016 expiration date. The Agreement calls for raises between 4% to 8% in the first year and a wage reopener in the second year. The larger increases were in the starting rates to bring below market starting rates up to market levels. The medi-

cal plan was changed to a high deductible plan with the deductible largely employer funded through an HSA. Local President Sandy Grace, RN, did an excellent job leading the negotiating team for the last time. Sandy will be retiring later this year.

### **UNAP Local 5201, Visiting Nurse Members Prepare for Bargaining**

Nurses, Home Care Aides, and Clerical staff are preparing to negotiate their next contract. The current Agreement expires on February 1, 2016. All three bargaining units have successfully negotiated their Agreements together.

### **UNAP Locals 5104 & 5075 Westerly Hospital Members Seek Wage Equity Adjustments**

It is not an exaggeration to say that the hard working employees of The Westerly Hospital have seen their hospital come close to closing. The Hospital went into receivership in December 2011 and was then purchased by Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, Connecticut. For the years immediately preceding receivership, the year in receivership and a few years following receivership, wage increases were either nonexistent or below market reflecting the shaky finances of the Hospital. But now, finally, the Hospital is on sound financial footing and it is only fair to seek wage increases that were lost in the past difficult times. The Union has reminded the administration of past sacrifices made by employees to keep the Hospital open. The Union has requested wage increases to return each job classification's rates to market levels.

### **UNAP Local 5098 Rhode Island Hospital**

The UNAP Local 5098 at Rhode Island Hospital secured a 3 year contract that provides for protections and financial gains over the life of the agreement. Despite the aggressive attempt on Lifespan's part to take away hard earned contract language, the Union member's participation in a sustained campaign of informational pickets, leafletting in the community, petitions to hospital administrators and rallies at Rhode Island Hospital was instrumental in securing an agreement.

The new contract language includes lay-off protection, preservation of a superior health plan, wage increases and preservation of steps, increases to on-call pay and more.

Congratulations to UNAP members at Rhode Island Hospital for their contract and their commitment to their union.

## Fatima Employees Protest Unfair Treatment



## Highlights of UNAP Leadership



Tony Bahia, President

I am the President of the newly organized service employees at Prospect CharterCARE, Fatima Hospital and have worked at Fatima for 17 years. In 2014 Prospect CharterCARE made draconian cuts to the health insurance of the employees not in the UNAP and covered by a union contract. It was then I decided we needed the protection the UNAP and a union contract provides for and to get involved. After months of organizing with my coworkers we voted overwhelmingly to join the union in April of this year. Over the past many months our bargaining team has worked hard to get a first contract. Prospect CharterCARE has shown themselves to be disrespectful to us at the table as well as unfair in their behavior towards employees, Prospect was charged with an unfair labor practice. Together with the registered nurses at Fatima we will work together to achieve our first terrific contract and subsequent contracts for the registered nurses.



## Fatima Hospital Service Staff Picket for Fair Contract

For over seven months, service workers at Fatima Hospital in North Providence have been trying to win their first Union contract. And until recently, the negotiations have been fruitless.

The new corporate owners of Fatima, Prospect CharterCARE, have gone out of their way to ignore the overwhelming vote in April by the Fatima workers to unionize with UNAP by stalling in the negotiations; refusing to agree to even the most basic contract protections and rights.

Fed up with management's tactics, the service staff, together with Fatima Hospital registered nurses, also represented by UNAP, conducted a number of informational pickets to alert the public to the antics of CharterCARE.

The workers conducted a large informational picket outside the hospital just before Thanksgiving, then proceeded to picket CharterCARE's satellite offices on a daily basis up to the Christmas holiday. The workers even picketed the hospital's annual employee awards' dinner! As one worker stated, "I'd rather be treated with respect and paid a fair wage than get a phony award and a rubber chicken dinner!"

As the Flame went to press it appeared that the picketing had gotten management's attention. CharterCARE's representatives agreed to have a Federal Mediator attend the negotiation, and promised a closer review of the workers' contract proposals before the first scheduled negotiation session in the New Year.



## United Nurses & Allied Professionals

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### Save the Date

#### UNAP's Spring CEU Program

Tuesday, May 3rd, 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
at the Crowne Plaza.

Donna White RN, PhD, CS, CA-DAC, Addiction Specialist at Lemuel Shattuck Hospital will be our guest speaker.

#### CEU Requirements

The Board of Nursing in Rhode Island voted that 2 of the 10 required CEUs registered nurses must obtain to renew their licenses, will need to be in substance and opioid addiction. This requirement will start in March of 2017. UNAP's spring program provides 2 contact hours.

#### 2016 Joan Medberry Scholarship Applications

The United Nurses and Allied Professionals awards 3 - \$1,000 scholarships to members or children of members. Access the application at <http://unap.org/resources/joan-medberry-scholarship>. Applications and material submitted are treated as confidential. The deadline for applying and applications must be received by March 31, 2016 at 4:00pm.

### UNAP Steward Training For new and seasoned Representatives

Tuesday, April 5th

9:30am-1:00pm or 4:30pm- 8:00pm

UNAP Office, 375 Branch Avenue

#### *Learner Refresh...*

*Special Status of Union Stewards*

*The grievance process*

*Your right to information*

*Weingarten Rights*

*Investigatory Interviews*

*Employee and Steward Rights*

*Get the Facts and demystify the process.*

**Registration Required by Friday, April 1st. There is no fee.**  
Tell us which session you will attend, your email and cell phone.

Food and beverages provided

Contact options:

email betty at [bwheeler@unap.org](mailto:bwheeler@unap.org)

Call Betty at 401-831-3647

Contact your local President