



NETWORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF NURSES & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AFT, AFL-CIO

Help Us “Keep the ‘Saint’ in St. Francis!”



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President's Podium

by Candice Owley, R.N.

Standing Up to the Medical Industrial Complex

Each day we read about mergers, acquisitions, consolidations and closures in virtually all industries. We see banks converting and suddenly having new names. Grocery stores and beer companies get swallowed up by national, and even global, companies. All of these changes affect our lives and community, but none are more disturbing than the changes in the healthcare industry. There was a day, granted some decades past, when healthcare was seen as a public good, a human right—not a commodity to be sold in the market. Maternity care was a service provided to a community, not a product line on which to make or lose money. It was seen as unethical and immoral for hospitals, doctors, or even drug companies, to advertise on TV, radio, or in newspapers. Care was provided in public and community controlled hospitals and clinics, and managed by doctors and nurses—not by financial executives.

Those days are gone, and now healthcare is seen as an industry where money, huge amounts of money, can be made. Decisions to offer services or even open a hospital are based on gaining “market share” in order to make money. Even discussions of quality and patient satisfaction become important, because they impact reimbursement rates, rather than being important in their own right.

We see this transition first hand in Wisconsin as we watch hospitals, clinics, ambulatory centers, pharmacies, and insurance companies grow bigger and bigger every day. Hospitals merge and, in response, insurance companies join together to have more leverage over hospitals. More hospital consolidations occur to have clout in dealing with insurance companies. Doctors create joint practices that are then bought out by health systems, and on and on it goes.

Missing is the organized voice of the frontline staff that provide the care. That is where unions come in.

Healthcare workers need a vehicle to deal with these new corporate giants, and the only effective one is a union. By joining together in their unions, the healthcare workers not only advocate for their own interests but, equally important, they fight to protect their patients.

The leaders of our union, WFNHP, came together this year and renewed their vision that healthcare must be a right for everyone in Wisconsin, if we are to have a just society. It is the mission of our union to be champions, not only for healthcare workers, but also for patients and the community. Guided by this mission our union

adopted a new, unified structure and made a commitment to stand with each other in the battle for quality care

for everyone. The leaders believe in the idea that an injury to one is an injury to all, and pledged to have each other's back—not just at their own union workplace, but also with the other workers in the state.

An injury is not just about the workplace, but about the damage done to our communities when profit rules the day in the healthcare system. That is why we are committed to fight for public services, to expose practices of corporate health systems and insurance companies that put their drive for profit ahead of the needs of the patients.

That means the nurses at the VA pledge support to the workers at Milwaukee County as they fight for quality mental health services delivered in a public system. It means that the Milwaukee County members will stand in solidarity with St. Francis in its campaign to “Keep the ‘Saint’ in St. Francis.” It means that the lab professionals at Froedtert will support the nurses and professionals at Langlade Hospital in Antigo in their battle with the Aspirus corporation, and it means that the nurses and support staff of Cumberland will stand in solidarity with Burlington nurses and techs in their battles with Aurora Health Care. It also means that all of our units will stand with our VA nurses in the fight to keep the VA out of the hands of corporate profiteers.

These are difficult days, and corporate healthcare is all around us; but, in the union, we are not alone.

We will be the voice that speaks out against corporate medicine and the medical industrial complex, and joins in campaigns to move our health system back into the hands of healthcare workers and the community.

We will stand up and fight back, because we know the fight for a just healthcare system based on community need and not corporate greed is a fight worth having. So, when you are asked to do something: sign a petition, write a letter, send an email, or put on a button, remember—each victory begins with one small step—so, be sure you are part of the march to victory.





Spring Election Endorsements

Nobody's vote is more important than yours! We have a lot of concerns this election. We're sure you do, too. Now, let's make sure we do something about them! **VOTE on Tuesday, April 5th** for candidates who will stand up for working families. How you vote is a personal decision. Our union has researched the candidates' records and believes these are the best candidates:

U.S. President: Hillary Clinton*

WI State Supreme Court Justice: Joanne Kloppenburg

Milwaukee County Executive: Chris Larson

Milwaukee County Supervisors:

District 1 – Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
 District 2 – Sequanna Taylor
 District 4 – Marina Dimitrijevic
 District 5 – Marcelia Nicholson
 District 7 – Michael Mayo
 District 10 – Supreme Moore Omokunde
 District 12 – Peggy Romo West
 District 13 – Willie Johnson, Jr.
 District 14 – Jason Haas
 District 15 – Eddie Cullen
 District 16 – John F. Weishan, Jr.
 District 18 – Martha R. Collins-De La Rosa

Milwaukee Mayor: Tom Barrett

Milwaukee - City Comptroller: Johnny Thomas

Milwaukee - City Treasurer: Spencer Coggs

City of Milwaukee Aldermen:

District 2 – Chevy Johnson
 District 7 – Khalif Rainey
 District 8 – Justin J. Bielinski
 District 9 – Chantia Lewis
 District 12 – Jose G. Perez
 District 13 – Terry L. Witkowski
 District 14 – T. Anthony Zielinski

Dodge County Board of Supervisors:

District 14 – Jeremy Bartsch

**Hillary Clinton was endorsed by our national union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).*

Know Your Voter Rights!

YOU WILL NEED A PHOTO ID TO VOTE!



This is our first election here in Wisconsin where you will need a photo ID to vote.

- ◆ Acceptable forms of ID include Wisconsin drivers license, Wisconsin DOT-issued ID, Military ID, or U.S. passport, but there are others.
- ◆ To obtain a free ID for voting, go to: www.bringit.wi.gov
- ◆ The address on your ID **does not** have to be current for you to vote, but to register, you will need to provide proof of your current address.
- ◆ For more information on the Voter Photo ID law, visit www.gab.wi.gov

To verify your local polling place contact your municipal clerk's office, or call 1-866-VOTE-WIS, or go to: www.myvote.wi.gov

You are required to sign a poll book and you must live in a ward 28 days to vote there.

Wisconsin voters may register on Election Day if you can show proof of residency in the election district for 28 days.

Stay in line if polls close while you are waiting you are entitled to vote. In Wisconsin cities with more than 10,000 residents, polls are open from 7am to 8pm.

Call the Election Protection hotline at **1-866-OUR-VOTE** (1-866-687-8683) if you encounter any problems at the polls.

Antigo — A Fight for Justice

Aspirus Langlade Hospital is a small critical access hospital in Antigo, Wisconsin, where the nurses and professionals have had a contract since the early 1980's. The relationship with management for the most part has been very positive, but corporate healthcare changed all that. A few years ago, Aspirus, a health system based in Wausau, took over Langlade. Last Spring, as contract bargaining began and our union came to the table, there was a new member on management's team, the Aspirus corporate lawyer from Wausau. For years, the hospital claimed financial uncertainty and, as a result, the bargaining unit members agreed to a contract with only a 1% increase. In Spring of 2015, however, our union came to the table armed with some new facts. The hospital had done extremely—well increasing profits by over 800%—and rewarding the CEO with a 28% raise in 2013, reaching total compensation of well over \$400,000 in one year. With this knowledge, the team made it clear that 1% was not a just or fair wage increase, but the hospital refused to budge. Twice, members rejected the contract; and, even with the

help of a federal mediator, there was no change in the wage proposal. What became clear was no longer was bargaining between the local hospital and its nurses and professionals—it was the corporation calling the shots.

After only a very few sessions, the hospital decided they would bargain no more and began to implement a number of changes. They even tried to claim there was a contract and sent out the unsigned document to the members. Our union went to the National Labor Relations Board, and last week the Board issued what is called "Charges" on 10 of the 11 Complaints—which meant the Labor Board believes the hospital has violated the law.

The ruling is a great victory for the workers and has given new energy and hope to everyone. Our union leaders are moving forward with a campaign for justice—they are talking to their co-workers and community, and will be holding a special dinner event as they move from the dinner table to the bargaining table in their fight for fairness.

VA — Working Together to Im-

by Jamie Lucas, Lead Organizer

With the first new contract of the last 23 years settling into place and a dynamic group of WFNHP leaders at the helm, big things are happening at the VA. A grievance victory and bargaining for the common good are just two examples of how these bold, union nurses are affecting positive change in their hospital, for nurses and patients.

A Grievance Victory and Preservation of Rights

When bargaining this new contract, our nurses at the VA spoke about inappropriate restrictions placed on their ability to select compensatory time in lieu of overtime. In conversation after conversation, VA WFNHP leaders heard about times when nurses were being told by managers to use compensatory time. However, it is clearly established in VA policy—and now in our contract—that compensatory time can only be used voluntarily when an RN requests it, and "No coercion will be used by Management to influence the RN's selection of overtime or compensatory time." A common problem that likely impacted this specific issue is that there are many places (handbooks, policies, directives) where VA rules are written. It was very hard to track down what *actually* should happen regarding compensatory time. Now, since we bargained with a solution to this problem in mind, these rules exist primarily in one document—the contract. There is now clarity and access to information, and there's a negotiated grievance process to resolve disputes about this information. In this case, WFNHP used the grievance procedure to correctly inform our

nurses of their rights to use compensatory time **ONLY** when they request it. Contract = clarity = knowledge = power = a better VA for all. It's a lovely equation, really.

Bargaining for the Common Good

Recently, the IV Team encountered an issue with staffing and interactions with immediate collect. The hospital attempted to implement changes to remedy this issue, but our nurses knew these things had to be bargained—their voice mattered and was necessary to solve this problem. One IV Team nurse came to our union leaders to present the problem. As a team, they focused together on a solution that would suit the nurses and improve care for the veterans. That IV Team nurse talked to her coworkers, crafted a solution with everyone's input, and then, as a union, met with management to propose the democratically-reached fix to the problem at hand. The hospital adopted the proposal made by the IV Team nurses, demonstrating once again that when nurses act as a union, they have a direct say in their practice and can advocate for themselves, as well as their patients.

Need a copy of your contract? Have a question about a situation at work? Think there's a better way to serve your patients? Let's figure it out together. Call us at (414) 475-6065, or email jlucas@wfnhp.org. We'll work it out.

Help Us “Keep the ‘Saint’ in St. Francis!”

Last month, Wheaton Franciscan St. Francis Hospital was taken over by Ascension Health—the largest non-profit healthcare corporation in the country. St. Francis is a vital asset to the Milwaukee Southside and provides a multitude of services to the surrounding community, who depend on St. Francis and its superior workforce for their healthcare needs.

St. Francis workers will begin bargaining a new contract in late Summer. This will not only be their first contract with Ascension, but also their first contract under the new so-called ‘Right-to-Work’ law. We are preparing now to ensure that we gain more support than ever from both the membership and the community, and that we set the tone with Ascension for all our future bargaining.

We need to join together to ensure that Ascension will continue to operate the facility as a responsible corporate owner. Any type of layoffs, service closures, cuts to pay or benefits, or other drastic or even moderate changes to our hospital, could potentially have severe ripple effects throughout the community.

We’ve done our research on Ascension and we found some very concerning behavior, including:

- ♥ Shuttering services or closing healthcare facilities completely.
- ♥ Outsourcing services to third party vendors or to worksites overseas.
- ♥

- ♥ Ministry Health was acquired by Ascension in 2013. Last year, they announced 500 job cuts right here in Wisconsin.
- ♥ Evidence that its pension program may be drastically underfunded. Workers brought a class action lawsuit in 2013, claiming it was underfunded by \$444 million. Ascension’s position is that it is a “church plan,” and therefore does not have to guarantee any of its promised pension funds.
- ♥ Ties to Accretive, a for-profit debt collection agency, which has been the subject of lawsuits in 9 states and was even banned from the state of Minnesota for its illegal debt collection practices, including harassing patients for payment while they were undergoing treatment in emergency rooms.

We all need to work together to ensure that none of these practices follow Ascension into our hospital. St. Francis is already a great place to work and we take pride in providing excellent care to our community.

It’s time to put patients before profits! Please help us “Keep the ‘Saint’ in St. Francis” by visiting www.wfnhp.org to join our campaign.



Victory for Wisconsin Diagnostic Labs Bargaining Unit

Last year, the bargaining unit at Dynacare Laboratories went through a corporate change and became Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratories (WDL) of Froedtert Hospital. The change was the fourth transition for the labs since 1991. While it is challenging and sometimes frightening (with good reason) to have your employer change hands, without a doubt there is a huge advantage when the workers have a union contract.

As in past corporate changes, our union, which represents all of the lab professionals, was able not only to maintain their contract, but also make significant gains. The new contract, which was effective 12/31/2015 will continue until 10/31/2016, was overwhelmingly ratified by the members. Improvements include: a wage increase of approximately 4%, increases in weekend, shift, and charge differentials, increases in third shift bonus and the addition of a second shift bonus, increase in call pay and life insurance, increased vacation, and

automatic 3% employer contribution to the 401(k) coupled with immediate vesting. Language covering mandatory overtime practices was improved, and overtime pay for working beyond the eight-hour day was preserved. The team agreed to changes in health benefits which resulted in increased costs, but there had been no significant increase for almost four years, so members accepted the change when coupled with the rest of the improvements. The employer also agreed to add a whole classification of casual workers to the bargaining unit, which increased the unit by about 20 workers.

This was the first contract since the passage of the law that made union membership optional; and, the great news was that approximately 95% of the members decided to continue as dues paying members, which is a great testament to our union leadership and membership at the labs.

Milwaukee County — Where There's Never a Dull Moment

by Jamie Lucas, Lead Organizer

Sometimes, that is a bad thing. Other times, it is a great thing. Recently, in spite of constant talks of privatization behind closed doors, chronic staffing and safety issues, and a dizzying election season, Milwaukee County WFNHP members have been hard at work—and even getting some positive recognition for their dedicated commitment to their jobs and patients.

Raises

All of our Milwaukee County bargaining unit members got a 1.5% raise retroactive to June of last year. The non-BHD members got their raise when the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors voted in early February. The BHD members got their raise when the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board (MCMHB) voted on Thursday, February 25th. No matter where they work, their paycheck will see a nice little increase in recognition for the important work they do for Milwaukee County and all of their patients. Congrats, but remember—none of this would have happened if they didn't act as a union!

Recognition from the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board

When the MCMHB voted to approve the 1.5% raise, the MCMHB members also seized the opportunity to publicly state their gratitude for the hard work our BHD members do every day for such an important population of people. Several Board members, both professionals and consumers, spoke highly of their experiences with our members, including one consumer who said he's had nothing but positive experiences with his psychiatric nurses.

Speaking Out for Safety, Transparency & Accountability

Over the last few months, WFNHP's County leaders have attended public meetings and hearings to stand up for their rights and their patients' rights. While 78% of the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board's meetings have occurred without public comment, WFNHP members were able to testify at the March meeting—delivering the message that public services deserve public accountability and adequate resources.



Jeff Weber, RN

Re-certification is Underway

Due to the preposterous attempts to dismantle our union in the requirements of Act 10, the almighty "Pledge to Vote" cards are making their way around to everyone once again. If you work in Milwaukee County and haven't signed one yet, [let us know you need one](#) by calling the office. Remember, this card doesn't mean you have voted—it simply means you are making the commitment to vote to re-certify our union. It will be mailed to you just before voting begins in April.

Aurora Opens Ambulatory Center — Major Impact on Burlington

For the last year or two, the members at Aurora Memorial Hospital of Burlington knew that the company was opening a new ambulatory center. This month, our union began bargaining over the impact of the planned opening of Aurora Health Care Southern Lakes, the new ambulatory center, due to take place October 17, 2016. At the table, the team was told that all mammography and some radiology will be permanently transferred to the new ambulatory center and those services will no longer be offered at the Hospital. This had been expected. What was not expected was that Aurora had decided to eliminate all Same Day Surgery, GI Services, Surgical and Recovery Room positions at Burlington, and then create the identical number of positions and services at Southern Lakes. The staff will be moved to the new facility, and will then be scheduled or rotated back to the hospital to do surgical procedures for patients needing hospital care (generally needing to stay overnight).

Meetings have been held with union members so that their concerns can be addressed at the bargaining table. This poses numerous questions, such as: How will the change actually work? What will schedules look like? How much call will be required? How will travel be handled for staff required to move between the two facilities? Bargaining will continue into early April, as the teams deal with how the transition will take place and work to develop a fair system, which will be brought to the members for a vote. Union rights will also have to be looked into as the Fall opening gets closer. About a third of the bargaining unit will be impacted by the transfer of services. In addition, Southern Lakes will include employees transferring from Aurora Lakeland Hospital into the new center.



Local 5000 Nomination & Election of Convention Delegates

It's time to nominate and elect delegates to represent our union at the upcoming American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Conventions.

Our local is entitled to fourteen (14) delegates to the 2016 American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention. The President is an automatic delegate, therefore, thirteen (13) additional delegates are to be elected. The AFT Convention will be held on July 18-21, 2016 at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Only three (3) delegates will have their expenses fully paid, but they will have to attend on their own time.

Nominations are also in order for six (6) delegates to the 2016 Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention. The President is an automatic delegate, therefore, five (5) additional delegates are to be elected. The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention will be held August 29-30, 2016 at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin. Only one (1) delegate's expenses will be fully paid, but they will have to attend on their own time.

Nominations:

Members from any chapter of Local 5000 can be nominated as a delegate. However, you must be a member in good standing for at least three months prior to the date of the election to be eligible. Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by another member in good standing. Nomination petitions for all delegates are to be turned in to the union office **by 5pm on Friday, April 29th, 2016.** (*Nominations may also be made from the floor at the membership meeting.*)

Election Information:

Election of all delegates will take place at the Annual Spring Membership Meeting on **Friday, May 6th, at 5:30pm at Klemmer's Banquet Center, 10401 W. Oklahoma Avenue in West Allis.**

- ♥ Only full dues paying members in good standing are eligible to vote.
- ♥ You must be present to vote—no absentee ballots.
- ♥ The elections committee will count the ballots and announce the elected delegates at the end of the meeting. Those not in attendance will be notified by phone or mail.

-- Delegate Petition for Nomination--

Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals, Local 5000, AFT, AFL-CIO

Please fill out the delegate nomination petition, sign it, cut it out and return it to the union office, WFNHP, 9620 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI 53214 **by Friday, April 29th, 2016.**

I nominate the following as delegate(s) to the **2016 AFT Convention:**

I nominate the following as delegate(s) to the **2016 Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention:**

Your Signature

Date

(Nomination not valid without signature.)



*Celebrate Nurse's Day
with WFNHP!*

Spring Membership Meeting

Friday, May 6th, 2016

5:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

Klemmer's Banquet Center

10401 W. Oklahoma Ave.

- ♥ Cash Bar/Cocktail Hour
- ♥ Family Style Dinner
- ♥ Door Prizes
- ♥ Election of Delegates