

# THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## Nurse Staffing Steering Committee: Update Bulletin

November 20, 2008

### Steering Committee Members:

NWONE—Gladys Campbell, Tracey Kasnic  
 UFCW—Sharon Ness, Cheryl Wilkinson  
 WSNA—Judy Huntington, Anne Tan Piazza

SEIU—Diane Sosne, Chris Barton  
 WSHA—Leo Greenawalt, Randy Revelle

The Steering Committee has met eight times. Some highlights of its working include:

#### Well-attended Training for Implementation of Nurse Staffing Committees:

The first round of training for the hospital level nurse staffing committees took place on August 22 and 23, in Seattle and Spokane, respectively. About 600 staff nurses, chief nurses, labor/management representatives and administrators participated, from more than 60 hospitals. Thanks to the Education Advisory Committee for hard work in developing and offering this training, and thanks to those who attended. Although the response was positive, feedback is being processed to improve the value of further training. To achieve success, it will be essential that administrators and staff nurses in each hospital work to ensure that everyone involved receives needed information and training, and work as a team to develop the staffing plans. Many examples of this team work were evident in the groups attending the training. For more information check out <http://www.wsna.org/Topics/Safe-Nurse-Staffing>

**Data Collection Progress:** The data collection and reporting system for nurse sensitive quality indicators is currently being piloted in a number of hospitals. Preliminary demonstrations suggest the system will be user friendly and provide useful and accessible data to the hospital level committees through an on-line system.

**Immediate Staffing Response Pilot Project is Beginning:** By the end of 2008, the "Immediate Staffing Alert" Advisory Committee will implement a pilot of an immediate staffing alert system designed to address real time staffing concerns in several Washington hospitals. The results of this pilot will be evaluated, and recommendations made for practices or programs that could provide real time staffing relief and enhance patient safety.

### Education Advisory Committee

*Steering Committee Advisor*  
 Gladys Campbell (NWONE)

*Advisory Committee Chairperson*  
 Sally Watkins (WSNA)

*Membership*  
 Chris Barton (SEIU)  
 Taya Briley (WSHA)  
 Tracey Kasnic (NWONE)  
 Cheryl Wilkinson (UFCW)

### "IMMEDIATE STAFFING ALERT" Response Process Group Advisory Committee

*Steering Committee Advisor*  
 Tracey Kasnic (NWONE)

*Advisory Committee Chairperson*  
 Patty Cochrell (NWONE)

*Membership*  
 Susan Greeley (SEIU)  
 Jan Iverson (NWONE)  
 Sharon Ness (UFCW)  
 Kristin Peterson (WSHA)  
 Sally Watkins (WSNA)

### Committee Origin, Legislation and Organization

The Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives; SEIU Healthcare 1199NW; United Staff Nurses, UFCW 141; Washington State Nurses Association; and the Washington State Hospital Association signed a Memorandum of Agreement on February 4, 2008 where the Governor presided, (press conference). The organizations committed to work together to address issues related to nurse staffing and other nursing care issues.

(SHB 3123) was jointly supported by the unions, hospitals, and nurse executives, enacted by the legislature, and signed by the Governor. The law requires the establishment, where they do not already exist, of hospital-level committees to produce staffing plan recommendations to hospital CEOs. The organizations also agreed to work together to examine and recommend further actions to address nurse staffing in Washington State, and potentially other joint proposals for action or legislation.

In November, 2008 the Ruckelshaus Center will submit a report to the Governor and Legislature concerning activities and recommendations of the committee. As the Governor noted, this joint effort by hospitals, labor/management, nurses, and nurse executives is unique in the country as a way of addressing the difficult issues around nurse staffing.