



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that with the current state of COVID vaccines and lessening of restrictions, all of you have had the opportunity to reunite with loved ones. It has been a long and stressful year, yet we do still continue to see our fair share of patients with COVID, therefore I encourage all of you to keep up your current levels of diligence to continue to protect ourselves.

As announced in the latest evening General Membership Meeting (GMM) our Vice President, Liz Hice has resigned. Per our Constitution and By-Laws, I can appoint a member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term with the approval of the officers. Julia Carotenuto-Sutton was enlisted and graciously accepted the position. She will hold the Vice-Presidency until elections on August 31, 2021. We welcome Julia with open arms, as she was a significant member of our last negotiation's committee and has worked at the hospital for many years.

We recently honored our fellow HPAE brothers and sisters on Workers Memorial Day by distributing and wearing ribbons on April 28th. The individuals honored were members of sister unions who lost their lives due to COVID and complications which ensued post exposure. Extended thoughts and prayers have been shared with the families and loved ones effected on behalf of our own local.

Staffing, has been a roller coaster ride with the census fluctuation. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has expired for COVID pay bonuses, however, texts and contract offerings are still in use. The CFO made rounds with Julie Powers last week and announced that there has been an increase in the budget to hire additional full time employees (FTEs) for all shifts. We were also able to encourage Inspira to retain or hire more agency nurses to get us through the summer.

In the meantime, please be advised that if you accept a contract and call out or have any type of emergency that prohibits you from working any shifts in the week, for the 4 week period, your contract may be invalid. The union does not have control over this. These agreements are made on a voluntary and individual basis with the employee and employer. Ask for the possibility that your contract can be extended for an additional week so that you can be eligible for the bonus money.

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Please contact me or any of the officers/reps with any questions, comments, concerns. Use the union email addresses, not our work emails that are listed on the bulletin board or HPAE website.

And as always, thank you for everything you do on a daily basis. Our nurses are invaluable to our organization! I see it every day. Be proud of your contributions, because I certainly am!

In solidarity,

April Ferrara MSN, RN, CCRN

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### IMPORTANT MESSAGE

*Please be aware that emails are being generated under my name by internet hackers. I will never ask a member or unit representative to send gift cards or any type of monetary values on my behalf. If you receive any such notification please contact me directly and immediately. Thank you!*

### VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, I just wanted to introduce myself as your new Vice President. My name is Julia Carotenuto-Sutton and I have been with Inspira (and previously Underwood Hospital) for over 15 years. I started my career here as a pool aid and worked to get my nursing license. I was first a nurse in the progressive care unit and now I am in cath lab. I am excited to be able to serve you all and help to make our local to make it the best it can be. I was on the last negotiations committee where we bargained out contract and saw firsthand how much power we have when we work together and speak with a collective voice. My role on the Executive Board will include reaching out to new hires and communicating with our unit reps. Please reach out if anyone has any suggestions or ideas on ways we can better communicate with each other.

## Holiday Scheduling Reminders

We are about to approach our first holiday for 2021 and we wanted to remind everyone that recognized holidays shall be paid at 1.5 times the Employee's regular rate of pay.

Designated holidays that are paid at this differential include:

Memorial Day  
July 4th  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Day

All Employees are assigned a Holiday Scheduling Group which rotates to the next group each year according to your unit's groups. This rotation will allow you to always know the holidays you are responsible for in advance. Please see your manager for confirmation if you do not know your holiday group. Employees may swap holidays in advance by filling out a form that is signed by both employees and approved by management. You can refer to Article 48 of our contract for start and stop times of holiday pay for your shift.



### **Save the Date:**

## **HPAE 2021 VIRTUAL CONVENTION**

**Union Strong through**

**Unprecedented Times.**

**You and HPAE.**

**Unprecedented Challenges.**

**Unprecedented Strength.**

## **October 6 – October 7**

*Look out for Local delegate elections coming soon.*

## Grievance Update

The Grievance process which is Article 39 Grievance and Arbitration in our contract, pg.30.

Please take a few minutes to review the process as well as the timeline.

STEP 1. Resolution through Nurse Manager  
STEP 2. Resolution through Vice President of Patient Care Services or Designee  
STEP3. Resolution through Human Resources (Director of Labor Relations)  
STEP 4. Arbitration

Nurses have reached out to me with in regards to the timeline and why sometimes the process takes longer than expected. Once a grievance is filed, management has ten days to respond, or I will file to the next step. Many of the items I file go directly to the hospitals Labor Relations Director. Information requests, dates for grievance meetings, as well as grievance responses have not all been responded to in the (10) calendar days. We see this as an unfortunate circumstance for which we have no control. At this time, we continue to resubmit items, or escalate to next step, if response is not timely. Our remedy is to continue to push for timely responses.

## **HPAE Retiree Medical Trust**

Zenith-American, the Third-Party Administrator of the Trust, has almost completed upgrading their website so that retirees can access information about their benefits and claims, and submit claims online. This new tool should be available to retirees effective July 1, 2021. **For more information about the HPAE Retiree Medical Trust call 201-947-8000 or visit [www.hpae.zenith-american.com](http://www.hpae.zenith-american.com).**



## COVID Differential Award

There are times when we can have victories without even having to file a grievance. A couple of nurses noticed recently that they weren't paid the COVID differential for qualifying shifts they had worked. Their manager gave them a response as to why they were denied that was different from their understanding. They reached out to our officers and staff representative to get clarification. It turns out that they were correct and owed back pay for several shifts they worked where they did not receive the differential. We encourage everyone to question things if something doesn't sound right or is different than your interpretation of our contract. Our officers and reps are here as resources for you. In this case, nurses would have lost out on hundreds of dollars in back pay if they didn't question what they were told by their manager.



Tell the NJ Hospital Association to listen to healthcare workers, patients, and the community. We must learn from the lessons of the last year. It can save lives and improve health outcomes for all. Take action at <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/listen-to-us-it-can-save-lives>



## Happy Nurses Week!

