



HPAE

50 Years

OF VICTORIES FOR PATIENTS & WORKERS

2024

HPAE CONVENTION REPORT



HPAE 50 Years OF VICTORIES FOR PATIENTS & WORKERS



HPAE 50 Years OF VICTORIES FOR PATIENTS & WORKERS









HPAE LEADERSHIP

HPAE State Executive Council

President Debbie White

First-Vice President Barbara Rosen

Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Rean-Walker

Second Vice Presidents

Alice Windley Barden, Local 5004

Tara Lyndia Ontal (Rojo), Local 5030

Daniel Hayes, Local 5058

Banita Herndon, Local 5089

Robert Davis, Local 5091

Ryan Novosielski, Local 5094

Sandra White, Local 5097

Judith Merkowsky, Local 5103

Sheryl Mount, Local 5105

Christopher Lewis, Local 5106

Ibidulla Umoru, Local 5107

Anne-Marie Howarth, Local 5112

Doris Bell, Local 5118

Caroline Sands, Local 5131

Anna Pona, Local 5138

Christa Saracino, Local 5142

Emer Frani, Local 5147

Christine Crimaldi, Local 5185

Nicole Mankowski, Local 5186

April Ferrara, Local 5621

Assistant Second Vice Presidents

Michele McLaughlin, Local 5004

Katherine Puca, Local 5030

Stefanie Ogle, Local 5058

Sabrina Brown-Oliver, Local 5089

Faith Mazuru, Local 5091

Sharon Hodge, Local 5097

Timothy Posser, Local 5103

Bonnie Terwilliger, Local 5105

Tamara Williams-Joseph, Local 5107

Anna McCausland, Local 5118

Kelly Fordyce, Local 5131

Alice Howarth, Local 5138

Joan Zitzman, Local 5185

Rebecca Lowe, Local 5186

Tracy Cefaratti, Local 5621



State of the Union Debbie White, HPAE President

Thursday, October 17, 2024



Fifty years ago, a small group of young nurses at Englewood hospital, in Englewood New Jersey, got together to discuss their difficult and demeaning working conditions, including being forced to rotate shifts, low pay and no recognition of education or experience. The nurses ultimately decided that the best chance they had of effecting change in their workplace was to unionize. When they won their union election in September of 1974, they became the first private sector union of nurses in the state of New Jersey and subsequently achieved wins in their working conditions that were publicized across the state.

Within a few years, nurses and other healthcare workers in surrounding hospitals began to notice the difference of being in a union and they, too, voted to join us in what was then called "the Englewood Nurses Association." Within 20 years, our small union of nurses had grown to ten times its original size as more and more healthcare workers joined our union. Now, 50 years later we are 15,000 members strong, representing nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, respiratory therapists, lab workers, blood bank technicians, food service workers, and even IT specialists in hospitals, long term care facilities, blood banks, labs, homecare agencies and research facilities. And we continue to grow.

We are The Health Professionals and Allied Employees, also known as HPAE and we are the largest healthcare union in New Jersey. We started out small but grew into a powerhouse.

We fought for competitive wages, increasing recruitment and retention of the best and brightest into our workplaces because we know that more staff equates to better quality of care.

HPAE was a major force in the development of violence prevention regulations in our state and to this day, our state violence prevention regs are the prototype modeled by other states, modeled in a federal bill and by those working on an OSHA addressing violence in the workplace.

HPAE was also the loudest voice in the state calling for safety in our hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was the most unsafe time in history for both patients and healthcare workers. Through lobbying and bargaining we have a safer work environment. When healthcare workers are safe, patients are safe.

Now we are in the midst of a national CODE RED campaign, fighting to win safe staffing ratios in our contracts and in a NJ law.

Within the last year we have bargained contracts that include safe staffing ratios at

- Local 5147 at Hudson Regional Hospital,
- Local 5118 at Cooper University Health Care,
- Local 5004 at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center,
- Local 5030 at HMH Palisades Medical Center
- Local 5089 at University Hospital.

Each local created a credible strike that put pressure on the employers to settle their contract.

In 2025 HPAE locals who will bargain safe staffing language, include:

- 5091 at Bergen New Bridge,
- 5138 at HMH Southern Ocean Medical Center,
- 5131 at Inspira Vineland,
- 5621 at Inspira Mullica Hill,
- 5058 at Jersey Shore
- 5186 at Carepoint Christ Hospital
- 5185 at Carepoint Bayonne Medical Center.

The Union is not me, not Barbara or Alexis.

But truly the power of our union to impact any employer, in fact, the power in every campaign, every organizing effort, the power in Trenton to move legislation, the power to win anywhere-- is in the members! Internal Organizing and the Member Engagement are our number one asset. The best way to ensure that we do not strike is if we are prepared to strike. That's what happened this past year and what will happen this coming year! You all are the power of our union and without all of you we could not have done any of this.

Thank you



HPAE 2024 Convention Business Meeting

Friday, October 18, 2024

Credentials Committee

April Ferrara, Local 5621, Committee Chair

Bob Davis, Local 5091

Anna Pona, Local 5138

Credentials Committee Report:

In attendance at the convention, there were:

- 99 Seated Delegates from**
- 19 of our Locals representing a total of**
- 13,943 votes that are registered**
- 121 non-voting members, guests and staff**
- Total of 220 in attendance**

Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Barbara Rosen, HPAE First Vice President

Alexis Rean-Walker, HPAE Secretary-Treasurer

Faith Mazuru, Local 5091, Committee Chair

Alice Howarth, Local 5138

The delegates voted to accept the below listed amendments to the Constitution and bylaws:

- Amendment No. 1 ARTICLE III. LOCAL UNIONS AND BARGAINING UNITS**
- Amendment No. 3 ARTICLE IX. STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
- Amendment No. 4 ARTICLE XI. COMMITTEES**
- Amendment No. 5 ARTICLE XIII. CONVENTION**

Resolutions Committee

Debbie White, HPAE President

Barbara Rosen, HPAE First Vice-President

Joan Zitzman, Local 5185, Committee Chair

Sabrina Brown-Oliver, Local 5089

Rebecca Lowe, Local 5186

The delegates voted to approve

- Resolution One: Growing Our Union through External and Internal Organizing**
- Resolution Two: Recommitting Ourselves to the Code Red Campaign: Saving Healthcare**
- Resolution Three: Responding to Artificial Intelligence in Our Workplace**



2024 HPAE Convention Finance Report

Alexis Rean-Walker, Secretary-Treasurer

HPAE members, let me again welcome you to our 2024 HPAE Convention, "50 Years of Victories for Patients and Workers". This meeting time gives us the opportunity to reaffirm our union, our pledge to fight for each other and to help strengthen working people in this great nation. It will be an understatement to say that the last 50 years was a smooth ride. We faced daunting challenges and continue to work in conditions of short staffing making incredible sacrifices to carry out our responsibilities on the job. Through the last 50 years we have had to rise to levels higher than we could ever imagine. But we are UNION STRONG.

As we press forward, your state officers and staff are making changes, making great strides, and accomplishing so much. In your program is the last audited financial report of the union for your record. We've accomplished much in finance over the last several years which is a joint effort with myself and our Executive Director, Chris Whalen. Let me mention a few:

- Over the past several years we implemented three New Accounting Systems. Yooz, a new invoicing system that requires two approvals as called for under the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, but, as it so happens, it turns out to be a very good document management system for invoices and payments.
- We also put in place a new travel expense module for processing staff travel expenses called Nexonia;
- And, we've added Sage Intacct, an accounting system to house all our transactions in an effort to provide more transparency.

These new transparent systems will deliver better reports and help the processes of HPAE move a little faster. These systems are setup to show more natural categories of expenses, making reports more understandable to the naked eye. Our LMs this time around were even more efficient than previous years. For example, in past years the LM process would take us weeks of back and forth review with our accountants. Just this year (September 2024), it took us one Zoom call of about 30 minutes to review and finalize our LM. The data needed from all finance systems allowed us to see the data in the correct buckets and categories.

We have implemented several finance policies such as a Reserve Policy to be sure we have 3 to 6 months of funds available and an Investment Policy to invest our funds when needed. These two policies are reviewed and processed after every annual audit.

We are working on a couple upcoming projects in Finance:

- We are working with the accountants to offer QuickBooks to our locals with similar natural categories as the HPAE system in an effort to help locals with their annual LMs and budget reporting.
- Strike Fund – we are adding funds monthly to our Strike fund in an effort to be ready if or when a local goes on strike.
- New ACH process is being completed to send electronic payments to vendors. This will save time in printing checks and frees the finance staff for other projects. The staff will upload the weekly ACH file to the bank for electronic payment to be received the very same day.
- Lastly, HPAE has sent letters to the 7 locals whose membership pays into the Occupational Liability Insurance to stop this deduction as HPAE will be providing this benefit to ALL HPAE members at no cost.

I take great pride in all that we are accomplishing in finance and with this union together. We will remain Union Strong - HPAE Strong.

CONGRATULATIONS



THE HPAE DELEGATES VOTED TO REELECT
DEBBIE WHITE, PRESIDENT
BARBARA ROSEN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
ALEXIS REAN-WALKER, SECRETARY-TREASURER

On Friday, October 18, 2024, the HPAE 2024 Convention Delegates re-elected Debbie White, RN, as President, along with a slate of state officers to continue leading HPAE for another three years. Barbara Rosen, RN, and Alexis Rean-Walker were re-elected as First Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively.

"It has been my privilege and honor to serve as your president over these past six years. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to do so for another three years," White told HPAE healthcare workers gathered at the convention.

"But truly the power of our union to impact any employer, in fact, the power in every campaign, every organizing effort, the power in Trenton to move legislation, the power to win anywhere-- is in the members!" she continued. "We are part of a powerful union, indeed, because our victories not only improve our work environment, but we fight to improve care for our patients, our communities and for the entire State and Region."

A fierce advocate for quality patient care and worker's rights, White got her start as a staff nurse at Virtua Memorial Hospital in New Jersey and was present in 1996 when its nurses organized with HPAE as Local 5105. She served as President of Local 5105 for eight years before winning election as president of HPAE.

White pledged to continue to fight for enforceable staffing language in HPAE contracts going forward and for regulations at the state and national level.

Rosen has been a union activist her whole career and worked to organize a union at Bergen Pines County Hospital (now Bergen New Bridge Medical Center) in 1978. Rosen previously served as Grievance Rep, Secretary, and President of the Local. As President, she led a very contentious, and successful, strike in 2004.

Rean-Walker is an activist with a heart and soul for the rights of others. Her start within the union began with Rutgers (UMDNJ) serving members at Local 5094 Central-South across the State of New Jersey (multiple counties) with Rutgers RBHS Campuses in New Brunswick, Piscataway and Rowan University in various capacities from liaison to Secretary to Co-President serving several terms.

Nomination and Election Committee

Sheryl Mount, Local 5105, Committee Chair; Doris Bell, Local 5118; Robert Davis, Local 5091



Local Awards



**Nanette Rivera,
Physical
Therapy Aid,
Local 5185**



**Judy
Merkowsky, RN,
Local 5103**



**Joe Ulanday,
RN, Local
5089**



**Alexandria
Boffo, RN,
Local 5118**



**Carolyn
Iorio, RN,
Local 5107**



**Jeanie
Harow, RN,
Local 5131**



**Jennifer
Covello, RN
Local 5186**



**Christopher
Lewis,
Respiratory
Therapist,
Local 5106**



**Nancy
Gannon, RN,
Local 5058**

