



## 19 Nursing Positions Saved...

In late October, Nursing Administration announced its intention to layoff a total of 19 RNs within NICU and MICC. This was surprising in that prior to this RNPA was unaware of the extent of management's intentions. As a result, RNPA conducted emergency meetings regarding the lay-offs for the NICU, Pedi, PICU, and MICC nurses. RNPA then developed and began implementing an aggressive strategy to deliver facts and data to the ultimate decision makers, the County Executive, Jeff Smith and the Board of Supervisors. RNPA, MICC and NICU staff worked together to educate the decision makers about the true census on the units, patient acuity and how that plays into nurse-to-patient ratios.

In November, as a direct result of RNPA's efforts, the NICU proposal to delete positions in that unit was taken off of the table. At that time management stated that NICU would be re-evaluated after the first of the year when additional census data would be captured. RNPA was also informed that Nursing Administration still planned on moving forward with the MICC layoff proposal to delete 10 FTE's. They intended to take their risky scheme to the Board of Supervisors at the December 15, 2009 meeting. This was in direct contradiction to what the County Executive had told RNPA the night before the November meeting. RNPA was told that he did not agree to the layoffs and that he would not take the proposal to the board. Nursing Administration's proposed layoffs made no sense given the fact that staff continued to report that there were daily nurse-to-patient ratio violations in MICC. At this meeting, RNPA addressed our concerns that many longtime nurses had been denied or were held up for promotion for various reasons and this past wrong could result in senior nurses being unfairly laid-off. RNPA successfully obtained an agreement with Nursing Administration and Labor Relations to expeditiously evaluate and process the promotions of eligible CN IIs. In the meanwhile, MICC nurses continued to send documentation notifying RNPA that MICC was out of compliance with the nurse to patient ratios and daily faced barriers in their practices such as lack of necessary equipment.

RNPA board members Rosemary Knox and Liz La Rosa spoke publically at the November 12, 2009 Health and Hospital Committee Meeting about our concerns with management's proposal to decrease staff when the data clearly illustrated that there should be an increase in RNs in MICC. MICC staff nurses attended and voiced their concerns regarding daily staffing, missed breaks, and a variety of patient care issues.

As a result, Health and Hospital Committee Chairs Liz Kniss and Ken Yeager rejected Nursing Administrations proposal to decrease staffing in MICC. This was a huge accomplishment. Due to the collaboration between RNPA and our nurses, 19 nursing positions were saved.



Warmest thoughts and best wishes  
For a wonderful holiday  
And a very Happy New Year!

The RNPA Board of Directors and Staff

# The Giving Tree



Santa Clara County is an expensive place to live. People in our community face many obstacles and the challenges they face can be overwhelming. For RNPA's drive we will be collecting items for Survival Sacks which include hygiene items for the homeless, tooth brush, tooth paste, deodorant, soap, etc. along with new or gently used coats, blankets and sleeping bags.

Community service organizations rely on members of the community to help meet the needs of struggling families.

Ten years ago RNPA took on the challenge of sponsoring a holiday drive. This year RNPA will again assist Sacred Heart Community Services.

RNPA boxes for receiving these items will be placed at Valley Medical Center by the Emergency Room Entrance, Main Lobby, and at the RNPA office beginning January 3rd, and will be picked up on Tuesday, January 12th by 10:00AM.

Effective November 2, 2009, you should have received your negotiated wage increase. Take a moment to review your paycheck.

# Is Your Assignment Outside the Ratios?



In October 1999, the California State Legislature passed AB394. This legislation required California Department of Health Services (CDHS)

to develop minimum, specific, numerical licensed nurse-to-patient ratios for specified units of general acute care hospitals. CDHS determined the requirements for minimum staffing necessary to protect the public health and safety.

According to the law: no RN can be assigned responsibility for more patients than the specific ratio at any time, including meals and breaks,

based on patient acuity and scope of practice laws. Once the minimum ratios are in place, additional staffing must be assigned based on patient acuity. There can be no averaging of the number of patients and the total number of RNs. A competent charge nurse, RN manager or break RN must relieve an RN during breaks.

Any unit with issues regarding patient ratios should fill out a "Ratios and Patient Care Issues Form" and fax/send it to the RNPA office. Forms can be found on the RNPA website: [www.RNPA.net](http://www.RNPA.net) under forms. An RNPA representative will review the form.

## The Current Ratios

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Intensive/Critical Care   | 1:2 |
| Neonatal Intensive Care   | 1:2 |
| Operating Room            | 1:1 |
| Post-anesthesia Recovery  | 1:2 |
| Labor and Delivery        | 1:2 |
| Antepartum                | 1:4 |
| Postpartum couplets       | 1:4 |
| Postpartum women only     | 1:6 |
| Pediatrics                | 1:4 |
| Emergency Room            | 1:4 |
| ICU patients in the ER    | 1:2 |
| Trauma patients in the ER | 1:1 |
| Step Down                 | 1:3 |
| Telemetry                 | 1:4 |
| Medical/Surgical          | 1:5 |
| Other Specialty Care      | 1:4 |
| Psychiatric               | 1:6 |



## Nursing Practice and the Law

RNPA is sponsoring our first continuing education class in 2010. The class is entitled, Nursing and the Law, Tuesday, January 5, 2010 at the Wyndham Hotel. Look for the class flier. The class will provide 7 CE's.

## RNPA BOD Elections

RNPA Ballots were mailed to members on November 19, 2009. If you have not received one, please contact the RNPA Office, 292-6061. Ballots must be postmarked by December 14, 2009. Ballots will be counted December 18, 2009 and results will be announced to the membership.

