

History in the making: We Passed Our Breaks and OT Bill

Our strength and unity and our knowledge that we know what works best for our lives and the care of our patients led to the state legislature passing SHB 1155, ensuring techs, nurses and CNAs at every hospital in WA get uninterrupted breaks and an end to the practice of using mandatory OT to staff our hospitals. We beat back dangerous amendments that would have been bad for us and our patients and now our bill heads off to Governor Inslee to sign, who has pledged to see this bill finalized for us and the patients in our communities.

We rallied in Olympia along with nurses and techs from unions across the state to deliver our final push to pass this patient safety bill. We sent thousands of emails, made numerous calls to our state legislators, door knocked for candidates committed to our bill, testified in Olympia and worked within our hospitals to start setting the foundation that led to the bill passage. It was our political power that made this become real for us and our patients and healthcare workers across our state. It was telling our stories and making sure our electeds knew what it's like to be a radiology tech who does 16 hours of call above their 40 hour week or a nurse that never gets to eat or drink water in their 12 hour shift.



More pictures and a Bargaining Update on back...



Melanie Arciaga, RN,
Executive Board Member of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW

"When fatigued, I am vulnerable to making medical errors, which are the third leading cause of death right behind heart disease and cancer. This is a matter of life and death. Uninterrupted breaks ensure the safety of our patients and prevents accidental deaths by medical errors. So state lawmakers did the right thing and passed a clean bill."



that we can really be powerful and make change when we stand together with one voice."

Maricon Nibre, RN 5E Med/Surg Tele

"When I heard our union was going to Olympia for our breaks and OT bill, I knew I had to go tell them about working at Harborview. We talked to our legislators, watched the discussion on the bill and then it passed! It was so amazing to see politics in action and feeling like I can really make a difference for my family, my patients and my co-workers. It was a good reminder



"This is just the beginning. Every single healthcare worker working in a hospital deserves a break. An uninterrupted break. Each of us deserves the peace of mind to know our patients are safe when we are taking a break."

Jane Hopkins, Executive Vice President of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW and former Harborview nurse



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We took action for break nurse on 4W Rehab



Our 4W Rehab nurses provide care to patients who have suffered major life changing medical events that require the same need for critical thinking skills as any other Harborview nurse and without adequate meal and rest breaks they too suffer fatigue and even worse a possible medical error. That's why 4W nurses with the support of our co-workers gave a

clear message to administration that they needed breaks too when they marched into Paula Minton-Foltz, interim Harborview CNO's office with a missed breaks board that showed all the missed breaks nurses had experienced. It's time Harborview administration respect the work of everyone in this hospital and ensure 4W Rehab is able to get the rest needed to give excellent care to each of our patients.



"I'm united with my co-workers to get a break nurse on 4West and ensure everyone on my unit gets a break. Breaks are important for patient safety. A 15 minute reset means you can go back and give safe care that's high quality for our patients. When we don't get breaks, it can be mentally exhausting and can affect safe patient care. There is a chance that you can't focus on patient care due to exhaustion. When other units get a break nurse they feel supported by the administration. Here we don't feel that support because when we let management

know we haven't been able to get our breaks and they tell us the buddy system works. Our break partner has too many patients to care for everyone. When you have a break nurse, they can focus solely on your patients. We work hard like our colleagues on floors with break nurses. Administration needs to show their support us and care for us too by providing break nurses for 4West."

Darlene Batchilly, RN, 4West

We told management:
**We know best what
Staffing our Patients Need**

Our proposals on staffing reflect our expertise in knowing what our patients need for safe care, recruitment and retention and justice on the job and respect for the work that we do.

- Charge nurses in all units unassigned and outside the staffing matrix.
- Require Joint-Labor-Management committees to develop and follow non-nursing staffing plans.
- Allow the staffing committee to make the final decision on the staffing plans, not the CEO.
- Eliminate rotating or variable shifts, unless mutually agreed upon.



has on our patients.”
Katy Brehe, RN, TSICU

“With all the duties a charge nurse is expected to fulfill, some part of care has to be compromised and it’s usually at the expense of the patient. This is why we are proposing the charge nurse is free of a patient assignment and not included within the staffing matrix. We know the studies that show better staffing leads to better patient outcomes, decreased lengths of stay and decreased cost but we must not forget the positive physical and emotional effect it



“Many who work on a rotating schedule have described it as feeling like they have constant jet lag and that it impacts their resiliency in working with the patients and families we serve. For many it is not sustainable for them to stay for long periods of time. This affects retention of experienced staff who may enjoy the work but go elsewhere for more stability and predictability with their schedule.”
Chrys Potuzak, SW, HCSAT

We’re Bringing Parity to Harborview

We work hard to provide the same great care as our UWMC counterparts do so why does UW value us differently? We want the same respect that is given to healthcare workers within Harborview and UW. This includes vacation accrual rates that allow us the time to recharge so we can give the care needed to our vulnerable population and ensuring our immigrant co-workers whose families live abroad can have enough hours to see their families.

- Vacation accrual equal to UW.
- 4 Weeks maximum management response time to vacation request with an explanation of why if denied.
- A lump sum cash payment once per year, for all vacation hours that exceed the 240 hours.
- Free UPASS.
- Hall Health/Research and HMC contract align, also called “Me Too” language.

Recruitment and Retention

We have a high quality, diverse staff here at HMC, people who believe in the mission and take pride in our level one trauma center. We need continuing education dollars that enable all workers to climb the career ladder no matter where they start. We introduced proposals that we think will entice diverse healthcare workers, who value education and professional development and provide every union member with access to the newest practices in healthcare.

- Increase to HCS education dollars to \$3,000 to accommodate for their frequent need for out of state travel to maintain licensure.
- Create a pooled fund from our unused continuing education money, for all bargaining units to use so none of the funds go unused and people no matter what job class have access to education.



“Creating access to continuing education funds means giving thought to how resources and advancement opportunities are distributed throughout our workplace. I support pooling our unused CE at the end of the year, giving every job class access to pursue more education. Equitable healthcare delivery is a national issue and the best way to stay on top of changes in both policy and practice is to have access to continuing education for all of us at Harborview, not just some.”
Heather Gates, HCS ARNP, Medical Respite

Our Next Steps:

We return to the bargaining table on April 30 for another round of proposals. We will continue to show our strength by talking about the impact these proposals will have on our quality life and in promoting patient centered care and racial justice for our patient and staff that is expected by the UW. We will each of us talk to our co-workers to build the unity and solidarity it takes to get a contract that we know is best for our patients and ourselves.

