Happy Nurses Day: Support H.R. 379, the National Nurse Act

By Elfrieda Johnson
President, JNESO Board of Directors

What better way to celebrate Nurses Day than to Support H.R. 379, the National Nurse Act and acknowledge the career of a modern day pioneer: Eddie Bernice Johnson, RN, BSN, MPA, an African-American woman from Texas who is the first registered nurse elected to the U.S. Congress.

The National Nurse Act of 2015 works to move preventive health forward by designating the acting Chief Nurse Officer as the National Nurse for Public Health. This position would provide a publicly visible nurse leader who would function alongside the Surgeon General and collaborate with healthcare leaders to address health disparities, set goals to improve the health of Americans, and raise the profile of the entire U.S. Public Health Service. Introduced as H.R. 379 in the 114th Congress, this legislation was reintroduced by Congresswoman Bernice Johnson (D-Tx) and co-sponsored by Congressman Peter King (R-NY).

Eddie Bernice Johnson was born on December 3, 1935 in Waco, Texas; her first aspirations were in medicine. She could not attend college in her own state because of her race, so she left Texas and attended Saint Mary’s College in South Bend, Indiana, where she received a diploma in nursing in 1956. She transferred to Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, from which she received a bachelor’s degree in nursing. She later attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and earned an MPA in 1976. She served as Chief Psychiatric Nurse at the Dallas Veterans Administration Hospital and entered politics after 16 years in that position.

In 1972, as an underdog candidate running for a seat in the Texas House, Eddie Bernice Johnson won a landslide victory and became the first black woman ever elected to public office from Dallas. She soon became the first woman in Texas history to lead a major Texas House committee, the Labor Committee. Johnson left the State House in 1977, when President Jimmy Carter appointed her as the regional director for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Johnson entered politics again in 1986, and was elected a Texas State Senator, becoming the first female and African-American from the Dallas area to hold this office since Reconstruction. Her particular concerns as a Senator included healthcare, education, public housing, racial equity, economic development, and job expansion.

As a lawmaker, Johnson was able to bring to a public forum her fight against racism, though she faced discrimination herself in the legislature. “Being a woman and being black is perhaps a double handicap,” she once told the Chicago Tribune. “When you see who’s in the important huddles, who’s making the important decisions, it’s men.”

We salute Eddie Bernice Johnson for her efforts to promote health and health care and we salute all our members for the hard work they do every day delivering patient care at the bedside in the facilities they work and in some cases the homes of the patients they visit. Thank You!

Thank you to members who attended Ed Day April 14-15, at the Sands Resort in Bethlehem, Pa. The response received from those who attended was overwhelmingly positive. Your feedback is critical for planning future CE workshops and will be used to begin planning for JNESO’s Convention in 2016. Congratulations to returning Board members, Lori Deibler and Michael Jernigan! Your continued dedication providing leadership to JNESO’s Board is invaluable. Congratulations also to our newest Board member, Florine Pearson Jones, from Hoboken University Medical Center! Florine was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Josie Punla, when she was appointed Vice President.

Did you see our billboards, newspaper ads and cable spots celebrating Nurses Week? (May 6-12).

Although Nurses Week is recognized each May, I’d like to take the opportunity to thank ALL of our members. From the Radiology Tech at Bergen, to the LPNs at Meadow View, to the RNs at VNA-CJ, Pocono, and all of our locals; thank you for your dedication to our Union!

Safe Staffing ratios have been a priority to JNESO for the past 25 years. This year, for the first time ever, the New Jersey Senate Health Committee heard testimony on our bill. Safe Staffing legislation has never before been posted for discussion; this happened, in large part, through our members’ collective voice. As our momentum builds, we’re launching similar efforts in Pennsylvania. Allies in other healthcare unions have sought our leadership on this issue and JNESO will lead the charge to Harrisburg on staffing ratios beginning in early May.

Working together, we accomplish great things; whether it’s at the bargaining table, through political activism, or at your respective workplaces. Our accomplishments are endless as we work to better our Union. We must also work together at our grievance hearings as well. Everyday, our Stewards are on the front lines protecting our contracts and members. Stewards sit across from management at hearings representing members seeking to right an injustice. Fearlessly, Stewards challenge management to provide credible proof behind a wrongdoing; not an easy task, especially when they take direction from management one day and challenge their actions the next. But know this, we are on the right side of this fight. Management seeks to circumvent or ignore your contract at almost every turn and our Stewards are there to turn back management from doing so.

Some of our Locals do not have a full complement of officers. Often your Local leaders encourage you to get involved and participate. Keep in mind that participation has several different meanings. Being a Local Officer is one way of participating, being a Steward is another, and being politically active is yet another. Although some may fear stepping forward it is the quality of mind that enables a person to face difficulty and show courage. As a healthcare worker, you face difficulties each shift you work. The passion and dedication for your patients is unlike any other profession, why not have that same dedication to your fellow members and your Union?

Don’t just sit on the sidelines, BE A LEADER! Over 60 members attended Lobby Day in March and 140 members attended Education Day in April. Greater participation means greater things happen for JNESO. Our Board of Directors has set a clear path for our members and union. JNESO has been more vocal, publically and it shows.

Fear is but a word that has no credibility; it is a mindset that holds us back from great accomplishments. It is a word that employers use to, “keep the union in line.” It’s ok to stand up and say “that is wrong and we are going to do something about it!!” In fact, not only is it ok, it is required to ensure better working conditions and fair treatment for all.

So in the spirit of Florence Nightingale; while fear doesn’t distract from treating your patients; don’t let fear distract you from strengthening your Union!
Safe Staffing Lobby Day -
A Huge Success Because of YOU!
By Christina Zuk
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

On March 16, more than 300 nurses stormed the New Jersey Statehouse as JNESO led the charge for a Safe Staffing law. Arriving by the busload, JNESO members met with legislators to discuss their experiences with unsafe staffing and to explain the need for a law mandating safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios.

To everyone who participated and made Lobby Day a success – thank you!

As you know, the battle to get a Safe Staffing law passed and signed will be a long one. Powerful interests oppose the bill and it is only through your active participation that we will be successful. Lobby Day was an important step, but there’s still a lot of work to be done.

As members met with legislators, JNESO Executive Director Doug Placa met with New Jersey’s State Senate President and Majority Leader to discuss a strategy for advancing this bill in the Senate Health Committee. We are pushing to get the bill posted in Committee and will be calling on you to join us again in Trenton when it is.

Putting continued pressure on our representatives is the only way to move this bill forward. Legislators need to hear from you – those who are on the frontlines of delivering healthcare and who experience the devastating impact unsafe staffing has on the health and safety of your patients. So if you haven’t already, please visit www.patientsafetycoalition.com to send a letter to your legislator encouraging them to support our safe staffing bill.

For our Pocono Medical Center members, we’re bringing the fight for Safe Staffing to Harrisburg as well! We just recently pulled together a group of stakeholders in Pennsylvania to coordinate efforts on getting a Safe Staffing bill moving, and we’ll keep you posted as we organize lobbying efforts and press events. Our efforts to move this bill will meet the same long list of powerful opponents, but I’m confident that with your participation we can get this bill moving.

Once again, thank you for taking the time out of your already busy lives to help move this issue forward. If you have any questions or would like more information on lobbying activities and opportunities for participation, please contact Christina Zuk at czuk@jneso.org or 1-800-292-0542 X132.

EYE ON YOUR CONTRACT: Time-off Requests

Every year at this time JNESO receives a number of calls regarding employee time-off requests. Here are a few things to keep in mind when submitting time-off requests:

- Know when your contract says you must submit a request for time-off, especially during PRIMETIME/PEAK TIME!
- Most contracts have language that honors time-off requests based on seniority, or first come first serve.
- Pay attention to your CBA’s MAXIMUM and MINIMUM allotted (amount of) time during PRIMETIME/PEAK TIME!
- Pay close attention to response time(s) so that you know how long the employer has to reply to your time-off request.
- Make sure you get the response in writing! (APPROVED OR DENIED)
- Keep copies of all submitted request for time-off as proof!
- If your supervisor/manager or designated personnel has not responded in a timely manner, don’t wait, follow-up and let your local officers know as well.
JNESO Members meet with Gary Schaer, Assemblyman in Passaic, NJ

Working Together, We
Make Our Voices Heard...

District Council 1 members storm Trenton in support of staffing ratios!!
Pennsylvania Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment
By Barbara Conklin, MA, RN
DIRECTOR OF PRACTICE

As a follow-up to a previous newsletter article and questions from this year’s Education Day, JNESO researched and discovered that POLST (Practitioners Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) is also offered in Pennsylvania, though Pennsylvania customized the acronym (Pennsylvania Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment). The goal of the POLST paradigm is to effectively communicate the wishes of seriously ill patients to have or to limit medical treatment as they move from one care setting to another. Like in New Jersey, in Pennsylvania POLST is a voluntary process that:

• Translates a patient’s goals for care at the end of life into medical orders that follow the patient across care settings;

• Consists of physician orders (in NJ a physician or advance practice nurse) that are based on a patient’s medical condition and his/her treatment choices as established in communication between the patient or the legal decision maker and a health care professional;

• Is designed to improve the quality of care people receive at the end of life by turning patient goals and preferences for care into medical orders.

The POLST form is not an advance directive. A POLST form represents and summarizes a patient’s wishes in the form of medical orders for end-of-life care. The POLST form is designed to be most effective in emergency medical situations.

For more information, visit JNESO’s website to obtain a POLST form in NJ and PA:

Remembering Teresa Laverty

Zurbrugg Memorial Hospital, (later merging with Rancocas and still later Our Lady of Lourdes) was 20 years old when Teresa Laverty RN put on her cap and started working there in 1955. This year we are remembering our colleague at her passing.

In 1982, Ms. Laverty cast a “No Union” ballot in the NLRB election that certified JNESO as the collective bargaining representative for the Rancocas/Zurbrugg Hospitals. Teresa was old school and thought unions were not needed for professionals. When the election was over she announced that any organization that would be involved in her future as a nurse would need her to participate. And participate she did, Teresa Laverty was an outstanding nurse and fortunately an ideal Local Union Leader.

“She devoted her skills and intelligence to her family, her patients, her peers and her Union,” Ginny Treacy remembered. “Along the way she was recognized as a consistent member of the Local Negotiating Committee. For each contract bargained, her stewardship and her service as a Chief Steward to the members, she was named “Steward of the Year” in 1988.”

All the while she thought we didn’t notice her constant presence and service. In 2005 when the JNESO Delegates voted at Convention to establish the “Mother Jones Award” the choice for a recipient was easy since the award is to “recognize the exceptional inspiration of lifelong care and devotion to the wellbeing of workers.” Teresa Laverty was our first “Mother Jones.”

We celebrated her 50 years of service to Zurbrugg/Rancocas Hospital on the picket line and at the conclusion of that two year strike Teresa continued to work until her beloved husband needed her more than we did. Until we see her again we hope she rests in well-deserved peace.
Thank a Nurse, Hug a Tech!

Yes we celebrate Nurses Day each May and recognize the International Day of Radiology each November, but have you ever broken a bone, needed a special procedure or had surgery? If your doctor has prescribed a Mammogram, an MRI, or a CT scan; your test was administered by a Technologist (Tech). JNESO’s Techs are employed in many different areas of the healthcare workforce in acute care settings and long term care facilities. The spectrum of work, intricate knowledge of equipment, and human anatomy require Techs to be specialized and often well educated. Like Nurses, Tech’s responsibilities have become specialized. Education and certification requirements have also evolved over time becoming specialized to precise areas of practice. A Tech’s responsibilities go beyond wheeling a patient into a room and pushing a button.

New Jersey and Pennsylvania require most Techs to be licensed. Depending upon the Tech position, each may require different totals of Continuing Education (CEs) and certification is generally renewed biannually. Licensing and certifications must be approved through a Recognized Continuing Education Accreditation Institution and can often be more stringent than Nursing Accreditation agencies.

Examples of Occupations for JNESO’s Technical Employees include, but are not limited to: Radiographers (Diagnostic, Therapeutic & Mammography), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Technologists, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs), Respiratory Techs (RTs), Sonographers, Radiation Therapists, Surgical Technicians, Cardio-Vascular Techs, Cat Scan Techs, Special Procedure Techs, and Phlebotomists.

Staffing is of great concern for Technical Employees. Like Nursing, patient acuity serves as a guideline for allocation of staff or to justify staffing decisions. Regulatory requirements mandate certain technical hospital positions be available 24/7. Depending on the test administered, Techs often spend long periods of time working with their patients. Sometimes the test can be routine such as doing blood work; other times the test can be longer and more worrisome for the patient such as an MRI or a cardio-vascular procedure. A Tech is there to answer questions and calm nerves.

Technical employees are vital members of the healthcare team administering tests used by physicians to diagnose ailments and administer treatment.

JNESO has long recognized the value of our Technical Employees. This year, for Education Day, JNESO expanded CE offerings for Respiratory and Radiology Technicians and will continue expanding CE opportunities for other Technical members so that specialized Technicians may hone their skills to deliver improved quality care for all our patients.

Thank you Techs for all you do!!!

Florine Pearson Jones, RN, BSN, MSN has worked at Hoboken University Medical Center (HUMC) for 27 years. Currently, she works on the Mother/Baby unit, and the Special Care Level 2 Nursery where she takes care of premature and sick infants; she is also an Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

Florine is a Local Officer at HUMC, serving as the Steward/Treasurer.

When not practicing nursing, Florine is a Clinical Instructor at three nursing schools. As a Clinical Instructor, Florine prepares nursing students to develop the clinical skills needed to care for patients in any healthcare setting.

Welcome Florine!
Working Together

Did you see our Newspaper Ads?

Join our JNESO NURSES who care for YOU by SUPPORTING SAFE STAFFING LEGISLATION!

THANK YOU to our Members for Saving Lives Every Day!

THE Professional Health Care Union
Learn how to Take Action Now!
Click on JNESO.org

Steward Training:
Tuesday, May 19, (10:00 AM - 3:00 PM)
St. Michael’s Medical Center Annex
(Contact your Local Officers or Labor Rep if interested in attending)

Board Members sworn in at Education Day.

Scholarship Winner 2015

Education Day was a huge success thanks to our members!
Makes Our Union Stronger

Have you seen one of our Billboards?

Safe Staffing Saves Your Life

PA AFL-CIO President Rick Bloomingdale addressed our members at Education Day
**Local Updates**

**Arbor Glen**
Vacation denials were brought forward at our last membership meeting, as well as juice for patients and medication administration, 401(k), orientation differentials, and tuition. Administration has responded by stating: Vacation requests are not denied and are responded to timely; food issues for patients have been cleared up; AG still matches 401(k); if you haven’t been paid for orienting, speak with the DoN; Tuition reimbursement WAS suspended (JNESO is currently investigating this issue). Please contact your Local Officers if you continue to have any problems in these or other areas! If you have any questions please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Karen May at (800) 292-0542 ext. 127 or e-mail kmay@jneso.org.

**Atlantic County Public Health**
Did you miss Education Day? If you missed our Education Day you missed a great time and 9.75 CES the enjoyable way. Why not consider participating in your local which needs officers? Training is available. Speak to your Local President Deb Wilson. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Labor Rep. Diane Grady at (800) 292-0542 ext. 116 or e-mail dgrady@jneso.org.

**Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation**
Your next membership meeting is June 23, at the Pfeiffer Center. (Times TBD). After the last membership meeting the issues that were brought forward were discussed with Labor Management. Primary issues involved equipment (lack thereof) and Pharmacy availability. There was also discussion of Bacharach initiating a scholarship program. After several discussions JNESO and Bacharach have agreed on the terms and conditions, and the applications should be available shortly. The scholarship money is in addition to your contractual allotment of education money. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Diane Grady at (800) 292-0542 ext. 116 or e-mail dgrady@jneso.org.

**Bergen Regional Techs**
We continue meeting with Labor Management and are addressing issues that come up. Members need to be vigilant in protecting their contract, seek out shop stewards if you have any issues. Please continue to bring any issues to your Local Officers or your new Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

**Bishop McCarthy**
Did you miss the last membership meeting on March 31? Maybe it was because you didn’t realize it was at a new location (Larry’s II Restaurant and Cafe). Please watch for upcoming messages about the transfer of ownership. JNESO is monitoring the sale with the Department of Health and may need to schedule a quick meeting that all members should attend. If anyone is interested in becoming a shop steward, contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Ellena Osborne at (800) 292-0542 ext. 119 or e-mail eosborne@jneso.org.

**Compass Group Bergen Dietitians**
Contracts will be printed and given out shortly. Please continue to bring any issues to your new Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

**Essex County**
Please join JNESO for Steward Training on May 19, at St. Michael’s Medical Center in the Annex for Steward Training. If you’re interested in attending contact your Local Officers or Labor Rep. Diane Grady know at (800) 292-0542 ext. 116 or e-mail dgrady@jneso.org.

**Meadow View Nursing and Respiratory Care**
Your Local Officers and Stewards have been diligent filing multiple grievances citing hostile work environment, erosion of the bargaining unit, unjust terminations and disciplines and an overall failure to follow contractual requirements with respect to time off requests, layoffs and posting of available time.

Direct Result of Layoff/Reduction of Staff:
- Hostile Work Environment
- Edit Slips
- Unauthorized OT
- Policy Interpretation:
  - Discipline Lateness
  - Call Outs
  - Lateness
- Address Racial Issues

The NJ Department of Health recently conducted a review of Meadow View practices that cite numerous cases of mismanagement resulting in:
- MV313-15 MARS/TARS Documentation
- Multiple ULPS have been filed against Meadow View Management
- Hostile work environment
- Erosion of bargaining unit
- Unjust terminations
- Disciplines and an overall failure to follow contractual requirements
- Time off requests, layoffs and posting of available time.
- Food issues for patients
- Juvenile and Adult Mental Health
- Multiple EEOC complaints against Meadow View Management
- Multiple ULPS have been filed against management, continue to bring issues to your Stewards, Local Officers, or contact your Labor Rep. Nikki Ramirez at (800) 292-0542 ext. 128 or e-mail nramirez@jneso.org.

**Hoboken University Medical Center**
We apologize for the inconvenience of cancelling the April 28, membership meeting. Look for notifications regarding a rescheduled meeting in the near future. JNESO along with management have started a Professional Nursing Committee. The volunteer group of nurses are working hard to improve matters related to your professional nursing practice and work environment. Contract negotiations are expected to start within the next two months. We are still in need of shop stewards and unit contacts from each and every unit/shift. Join JNESO on May 19, at St. Michael’s Medical Center in the Annex for Steward Training. If you’re interested in attending contact your Local Officers or Labor Rep. Diane Grady know at (800) 292-0542 ext. 116 or e-mail dgrady@jneso.org.

**Mercer Home Health Care**
The contracts have come in and we will be setting up a general membership meeting to distribute in the coming weeks. There will be an e-mail blast to confirm the date. If you have any questions or concerns contact your Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

*Please contact your Local Officer or Labor Rep if you are interested in becoming a Steward.*
Local Updates

Newark Public Health
Join us for Shop Steward Training on May 19, at St. Michael’s Medical Center in the Annex room. If you are interested contact your Local Officer or Labor Rep. Meredith Larson. Please keep us informed regarding issues that come up. If you have any questions or concerns contact your Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

Pocono Medical Center
Your next membership meeting is June 11, 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 1:30 PM, 5:00 PM, and 8:00 PM (Stroud Hall Rm 116). There will be a Nurse Roundtable on Staffing during each membership meeting! There will be officers available all day. Welcome our new Local Vice President, Kelly Bratcher – ER days!! Your newly negotiated contract is close to being formally signed-off. It will then go to print and be distributed to you! Shared Governance Committees are being re-implemented very soon! Please contact your Local Officers if your unit does not have a representative on this Committee. Float Pool Update: The evening differential will also be paid to day shift Float Pool nurses who work between the hours of 3:00 PM-7:00 PM! Staffing continues to be a BIG problem… please continue to fill out your Short Staffing Forms and call the Dept of Health when necessary! If you have any questions please contact your new Labor Rep. Karen May at (800) 292-0542 ext. 127 or e-mail kmay@jneso.org.

St. Mary’s RNS
Adequate Staffing seems to be a concern for every nurse on every shift. Although Short Staffing forms have increased keep filling them out! These issues were brought up at Labor Management and the staffing committee meeting. Continue to be diligent letting us know what is happening on your unit. The best way to protect patients and your jobs is to have more active Shop Stewards. The officers need your help. Please join us for Steward Training May 19, at St. Michael’s Medical Center in the Annex. If you are interested in attending let your Local Officers or your Labor Rep. Diane Grady know. If you have any questions or concerns contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Diane Grady at (800) 292-0542 ext. 116 or e-mail dgrady@jneso.org.

St. Mary’s Techs
Any problems with changes to your shifts, titles, job duties, On-Call, parking, or timekeeping issues? Please inform your Local Officers immediately. JNESO has filed numerous grievances regarding these matters and will keep you informed of our progress. Education Day at the Sands provided Radiology & Respiratory techs with 9.25-10.75 CE's! We had a great time and hope many more will attend next year’s Convention. Please join us for Steward Training May 19, at St. Michael’s Medical Center in the Annex. Anyone interested in becoming a Steward for your Department, please contact your Local Officers or your Labor Rep, Karen May. Your participation is vital to upholding our contract! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Karen May at (800) 292-0542 ext. 127 or e-mail kmay@jneso.org.

St. Michael’s Medical Center
Your next membership meeting is June 11, at 7:45 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 2:00 PM, and 3:30 PM. (Location TBD). Join us for Steward Training May 19, in the Annex. Contact your Local Officers or your Labor Rep. Meredith Larson if you are interested in attending. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

VNA of Central Jersey
Your contracts will soon be printed and distributed. Please make sure that all time spent on home visits is documented. Continue to fill out short staffing forms. If you have any questions, please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Rep. Meredith Larson at (800) 292-0542 ext. 115 or e-mail mlarson@jneso.org.

Scholarship winner 2015
Virtua Hospitals and Healthcare
Labor Management meetings have started once again; at these meetings your Executive Committee meets with Virtua Executives to discuss issues of importance to you. As per our new contract a Staffing Committee Meeting has been added and will begin on May 14. These meetings will be held monthly. If you would like to add anything to the agenda reach out to your Labor Representatives. Mother/Baby 2 will be combined with Mother/Baby 3 to make one unit. Mother/Baby 2 nurses PTO (vacation) time and seniority will not change. If Virtua needs to cancel any nurses they will follow the CBA, check your contract changes Article 48. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a Local Officer or your Labor Reps. Nikki Ramirez at (800) 292-0542 ext. 128 or e-mail nramirez@jneso.org or Ellena Osborne at (800) 292-0542 ext. 119 or e-mail eosborne@jneso.org.
INSIDE:

“How very little can be done under the spirit of fear,” Florence Nightingale: 2
Safe Staffing Lobby Day: A huge success because of YOU: 3
Thank a nurse, Hug a Tech: 7
Local Updates: 10-11
...and much more!