On Monday, members of the Professional Practice and Patient Safety Council met with nurses on 3NE to investigate serious patient safety concerns and rampant violations of the hospital’s own staffing matrix. Since the inception of NNU’s new Assignment Despite Objection form, the PPPSC has received over a dozen ADOs from 3NE. Many of the forms were signed by multiple nurses, an indication of the widespread dissatisfaction with management’s unwillingness to address nurses’ patient care concerns.

In an attempt to have a civil and professional discussion about nurses’ concerns and the volume of ADOs, the PPPSC requested a meeting with interim nursing director, Cynthia Thompson and her supervisor, Arian Gebrehiwot. Rather than utilize discretion in a public corridor, Gebrehiwot immediately demanded that nurses leave the break room. When nurses preferred to focus on a serious discussion about care delivery on 3NE, Gebrehiwot called Paul Hagens, the Director of Employee and Labor Relations. Instead of facing nurses who care for cancer patients on his own, Hagens brought reinforcements in the form of an armed guard.

“I always knew that nurses were powerful but management’s response to nurses coming together to discuss safe patient care was appalling. Sending an armed security guard to remove nurses from a patient focused meeting was meant to intimidate us and keep us from discussing the real issues at Washington Hospital Center. We are only emboldened by this action and will continue to advocate for patients,” says Erica Ward, a member of the PPPSC from 3H.

In the end, the nurses were victorious as management agreed to meet with 3NE nurses and the PPPSC on July 16th. “We look forward to having an open dialogue about moving forward so that patients can get the best care possible,” added Noumbissi. “Our PPPSC takes its obligations very seriously and we will continue to request meetings with management when nurses have concerns,” says Lori Marlowe, PPPSC chair from 4D.

Lori Marlowe educates 3NE nurses about the matrix. An empty chair was left for Cynthia Thompson, interim director of 3NE.

Dru Gist discusses the large quantity of Assignment Despite Objection forms received from nurses on 3NE. She encouraged nurses to continue reporting unsafe situations.
HUNDREDS OF NURSES RECEIVE ANNUAL TRANSITIONAL PAYMENT

On Saturday, over 500 nurses began receiving their annual transitional payment checks of $500 or $1000 with the vast majority of nurses receiving the larger payment. The annual transitional payment is detailed in Article 39.9 of the collective bargaining agreement and is meant to replace the evening differential. Nurses who are 36 hour day nurses or nurses who rotate (i.e., work a 6:00 a.m.–6:30 p.m. or 7:00 a.m.-7:30 p.m. shift) or are either full-time or part-time nurses whose worked shifts over the past twelve months regularly were 12 hour day shifts, shall receive a bonus of $1,000. Additionally, nurses who don’t meet the criteria previously described and who previously received an evening differential under the “majority of hours” rule and who no longer will receive that differential, and whose shifts for the past twelve months do not meet the 50% criteria shall receive a differential of $500. The transitional payments were one of the final items agreed to in negotiations for our current contract. In fact, these payments were only on the table after nurses decided to take a bold stand for nurse retention on the picket line. If you believe that you are eligible for a payment, please contact NNU.

WHC NURSES JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR THE ROBIN HOOD TAX ON JUNE 19th

From the halls of Congress to a picket line in front of the DC office of JP Morgan, Washington Hospital Center nurses are leading the local charge for the financial transaction or Robin Hood Tax. The Robin Hood tax is a small 0.5% tax on large stock transfers. It is estimated that it could raise as much as $350 billion for health care, education, or a variety of other pressing needs. A worldwide movement is developing around the Robin Hood tax and on June 19th, actions took place in Rio De Janeiro, Guatemala, and in the United States. Unregulated speculation has cost jobs and homes and the Robin Hood Tax would help temper irresponsible trading. Large banks received huge bailouts from American taxpayers but taxpayers haven’t seen any returns on their investments in these banks. On June 19th, Washington Hospital Center nurses paid a visit to the Rayburn Office Building, where JP Morgan CEO Jaime Dimon testified in front of the House Financial Services Committee. Dimon defended his firm’s role in lobbying Congress for even less oversight of the banking industry (which has been operating thanks to the generosity of American taxpayers!) Dimon, fearful of the WHC nurses, chose to go into the hearing room, through the back door rather than face the nurses. Nurses then proceeded to the local office of JP Morgan at 800 Connecticut Ave for a rally and picket line. Patrons of the neighborhood’s high end bistros received a lunch time serenade from the nurses while they enjoyed their lunches. Look for more local Robin Hood Tax activities coming soon.