

# Regionally Speaking

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE ONE • April 2010

## Council Members

Fabiano Bueno, Chair  
Boston Medical Center

Ginny Ryan, Vice Chair  
Faulkner Hospital

Betsy Prescott, Secretary  
St. Elizabeth's Medical Center

Ann Marie McDonagh, Treasurer  
Tufts Medical Center

MNA Board Rep (2009-2011)  
Dan Rec

MNA Board Rep (2008-2010)  
Ginny Ryan

At-Large (2009-2011)  
Ann Marie McDonagh & Patricia O'Neill

At Large (2008-2010)  
Karen Higgins & Dan Rec

Each of these Region 5 facilities holds  
an elected voting representative at  
Region 5 council meetings:

American Red Cross  
Boston Medical Center  
Boston VNA  
Brigham & Women's Hospital  
Cambridge Hospital  
Carney Hospital  
Norwood Hospital  
St. Elizabeth's Hospital  
Dana Farber Cancer Institute  
Dialysis Clinic, Inc.  
Faulkner Hospital  
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates  
Kindred Health Care—Braintree  
Medford School Nurses  
Newton Public Health  
Newton-Wellesley Hospital  
Quincy Medical Center  
Radius—Boston  
Radius—Quincy  
Somerville Hospital  
Tufts Medical Center  
Whidden Memorial Hospital  
Unit 7 Representative

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BRIAN MOLONEY, CMTY. ORGANIZER

## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

*We must learn to live together as brothers or we are going to perish together as fools.—Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Since becoming Chair of Regional Council 5 – Greater Boston, I've shared my thoughts at the start of this journey in an open welcome to the nurses in this region. MNA went through an unusually challenging year in 2009. But, thanks to a great many of you, it was also a year of real accomplishments. A new national union was launched – NNU – which brings hope to the profession of nursing, a promising education in leadership, and a strong commitment to the members. This brings a surge in opportunities for what and where we can be useful in the community.

We start this journey with a renewed sense of purpose and possibility – knowing we've made encouraging progress in adapting to our changed financial landscape, and understanding that difficult challenges remain.

The MNA is the vehicle the nurses most rely on to guide, teach and advance their knowledge. The vehicle we've built here has been enormously powerful and productive over many years. Now, in the spirit of the times, we're challenged to ask ourselves: how can we create a nimbler, more modern, more fuel-efficient vehicle to drive us forward?

Individuals and small groups can accomplish a great deal in the profession of nursing by working within their bargaining units. But MNA can accomplish a great deal more if we find ways to help members engage in their common interests. Thanks to an intensive planning effort, involving many members throughout the region, aspiration is converging with reality. New courses are taking shape and we are reliving the early

1990s. The hospital industry is re-inventing or revisiting their old strategies, making staffing cuts and putting the patients at risk, and the nurses in jeopardy. We have seen this pattern all over the region. The best available evidence was the past job action – an informational picket involving two major facilities in Region 5. This event led this region to engage in a broader approach to accomplish the common benefit of the members.

Region Council 5 – Greater Boston has a powerful influence in our organization. I call upon the members to participate in the region's activities and to engage in productive discussions that can enlighten and unite us, a productive approach to empower nurses in difficult times.

Region 5 has many ways to communicate with members. Our regional council meetings are where the chairs of the bargaining units have a chance to express their local experiences and explore ideas on how we can be more productive as a collaborative labor force. The MNA website is growing and has the potential to be a fast, effective and safe way to communicate to all members. All members have access to the entire website via their e-mail and passwords. Please contact the Membership Division for further information.

In summary, Regional Council 5 is open to members and we look forward to hearing from you. ■



*Fabiano Bueno  
Region 5 Chair*

## In This Issue:

*Convention 2010 Region 5 Reimbursements:  
R5 members are eligible for convention reimbursement.  
Contact the R5 office or check the R5 website for more  
information and reimbursement forms.*

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# Bargaining Unit Updates



**American Red Cross** submitted by Eamon Hogan. All is quiet on the Red Cross front.

**Boston Medical Center** submitted by Lisa Swattelle. BMC held a combined picket with Tufts Medical Center to inform the public about the reduction in staff caring for the patients in both facilities. BMC has welcomed a new CEO, Kate Walsh, who will be meeting the committee to explore new communication strategies to improve the nursing relationship with the hospital administration. The nurses are working under suboptimal conditions, under staffed and with minimal ancillary help. Violence in the workplace has been a work in progress. The ICUs have been under restructure. Nurses continue to stay close and united to push-back the unsafe environment that we have experienced.

**Boston VNA** submitted by Tony Antonelli. We are preparing for negotiations to take place this fall.

**Brigham & Women's Hospital** submitted by Barbara Norton. Chair reported, "BWH is not interested in participating in or with the Region 5 newsletter at this time."

**Cambridge Hospital** submitted by Susan Wright Thomas. MNA continues to work through many issues related to the extensive Cambridge Health Alliance reorganization. Nearly every nurse in the unit was affected directly/indirectly and we lost critical ancillary staff. We are transitioning to a "new" leadership team; our committee has retained seasoned officers and we are actively recruiting and developing current and new floor reps and subcommittee chairs. Preparation for contract negotiations has begun with a member survey and discussions about the structure of the negotiating team, possible ground rules, and proposals to strengthen contract rights. Management's imposition of a new systems has presented us with several new issues and problems to solve. We continue our activities supporting our members in multiple grievance and disciplinary processes. Exploring ways to solidify relationships with other CHA bargaining units. Elizabeth Cadigan, coming from Quincy Medical Center, will be CNO in April. We are interested to know of the experiences of other nurses under Ms. Cadigan's leadership.

**Carney Hospital** submitted by Allison Zimmon. The Carney bargaining unit has been negotiating with management for a new contract since the fall. We've held seven all-day sessions so far. The major issues at the bargaining table are wages, pension, retiree medical insurance and floating. Telemetry was recently introduced to our medical/surgical floors in the wake of the closure of the step-down unit. This has been a challenging transition for our nurses and the bargaining unit has continued to support them through this time.

**Norwood Hospital** submitted by Joan Ballantyne & Kathy Reardon. Still in negotiations. Agreed on minor points including

establishing a workplace violence task force. Meetings with other Caritas hospitals. Split shift floating remains to be our biggest dissatisfier; will continue to work on this issue.

**St. Elizabeth's Hospital** submitted by Betsy Prescott. Our contract ends April 30, 2010. Proposals have been developed based on surveys and feedback from an open meeting. There have been meetings with representatives of other MNA-represented hospitals within the Caritas System to compare notes on contract negotiations and benefits being offered by Caritas to the 2,000-plus membership nurses. Over 175 RNs enjoyed a fun evening in November with dinner, entertainment by a nurse humorist and a raffle. The entire event was sponsored by Region 5. The on-line nursing documentation program, Alaris Pump introduction and CPOE rollouts have caused an inordinate amount of stress on RNs due to poor planning, lack of support and a dearth of resources. Our newest CNO, the third in nine months, is Donna Clews who joined Caritas in November 2009. Donna comes to us from a non-union hospital in Pennsylvania following an extensive nationwide search.

**Dana Farber Cancer Institute** submitted by Kathleen McDermott. Overwhelmingly voted to ratify a new contract. The new pact provides a wage increase and all other contractual benefits were retained. We are pleased to have worked collaboratively with the DFCl administration to reach this agreement. DFCl continues to recognize the value of nurses and the vital role they play in delivering care to the patients and their families.

**Dialysis Clinic, Inc.** submitted by Peter Costello. Nothing going on with our group at the moment.

**Faulkner Hospital** submitted by Dan Rec and Ginny Ryan. Faulkner Hospital is a community teaching hospital where the nurses are a

family, both inside and outside of work. We lost two members of our family with the deaths of Carol Carey RN and Trisha Reardon RN; both will be greatly missed. Last spring with the help from Region 5, our executive committee held a party for the bargaining unit to strengthen union solidarity and to improve morale within the hospital. The nurses are still talking about it and are hoping that it will become an annual event. In the fall, we held a prize contest for everyone who accessed their MNA email address/web mail as an incentive for future communications within the bargaining unit... that remains a work in progress! We ended contract negotiations with a tentative agreement that the executive committee supports and we have scheduled a ratification meeting on March 30 at the hospital.

**Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates** no chair/designee, no report submitted.

**Kindred Health Care—Braintree** no chair/designee, no report submitted.

**Medford School Nurses** submitted by Lucinda Riggan-Jay. The Medford School Nurses are pleased with their current contract with the School Committee of the City of Medford. During the course of the three-year contract, the nurses will see salary increases totaling 10 percent. 11 MNA nurses serve the public schools of Medford.

**Newton Public Health** submitted by Sue Riley. The Newton Public Health Nurses are a small unit comprised of both school nurses and public health nurses employed by the City of Newton. Currently we are without a contract. Our contract expired in June 2009. We look forward to starting negotiations with the new mayor in the near future. Our biggest challenge and most recent undertaking was the vaccinating of both students and residents for the H1N1 outbreak. We ran clinics in all of our schools during the day for students and many community clinics in the evening. We are committed to our schools and our city.

**Newton-Wellesley Hospital** submitted by Beth Amsler. Starting to plan for contract negotiations. Campus to go smoke-free on April 1.

**Quincy Medical Center** submitted by Joanne Hart. We're in the middle of difficult negotiations. Hospital in financial danger and is seeking 3 percent pay cut and 5 percent increase in health insurance. The nurses are seeking clarification of staffing language. There is little movement being made by management. We are seeking mediation for next session.

**Radius—Boston** submitted by Mina Warrick. A new contract has been reached for 2009-2011. There was a modest pay raise. The hospital withdrew the earned time proposal and kept the 401K matching contribution plan—big issues for the nurses.

## MNA Region 5 Movie Night Presents

*With Babies and Banners:* This documentary was nominated for an Academy Award. The film pays tribute to the women – working women, wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts of the strikers – who became the backbone of the 1937 General Motors sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan. These women called themselves the Women's Emergency Brigade. This film highlights how issues of gender and racial equality remain central to today's labor movement.



Tuesday, June 8, 2010

MNA Region 5 Office

5:30 Pizza,

6:00 Movie & Popcorn

6:45 Food, Discussion, Fun

Bring your co-workers, friends & family. Children welcome.

RSVP to let us know you're coming.

781-821-8255 or region5@mnarn.org

## How Does the MNA's Political Action Committee (PAC) Work?

PACs, or Political Action Committees, raise and spend money to either elect or defeat particular political candidates. Many years ago, the MNA formed the Mass Nurses PAC as its Political Action Committee. This is a state PAC that supports local, state legislative, and statewide candidates like State Rep., State Senator, or Governor.

### How does the PAC decide who gets endorsed?

Political endorsements are often controversial, so the Mass Nurses PAC uses a *thorough and rigorous* evaluation process to decide who gets endorsed and who doesn't.

- The PAC closely reviews the voting records of incumbent legislators seeking re-election.
- For candidates without a voting record to review, the PAC sends a detailed questionnaire. Candidates who want the endorsement are required to complete the questionnaire in its entirety.
- The PAC reviews the questionnaire, and then conducts a rigorous interview with promising candidates. The PAC doesn't endorse in every race - sometimes they elect to stay neutral.
- The PAC is always interested in the views of local nurses when making an endorsement, so if you have an opinion about your elected officials, you should let us know!

For federal offices, like Congress or President of the United States, and for statewide offices like Governor or Attorney General, the PAC is not the final decision maker. In those races, the PAC makes recommendations to the MNA Board of Directors, which makes the final decision.

### How is the PAC structured? How can I get involved?

There are 21 seats on the PAC Board made up of four elected officers, 10 at-large elected members, and seven appointed seats. Each seat serves for a two-year term.

Any voting MNA member in good standing can run for a seat on the PAC. Every year at Convention the PAC conducts its own business meeting and election. Elections for Chairperson and Treasurer are held during the odd years. Elections for Vice-Chairperson and Secretary are held during the even years. Each year, elections are held for five of the at-large seats.

The seven appointed seats are allocated as follows:

MNA President = 1 seat, Chair of the Congress on Health Policy and Legislation = 1 seat, and each of the five Regional Councils appoint one representative = 5 seats.

There are a variety of ways to support the Mass Nurses PAC. You can:

- Contribute to the PAC financially (PAC money is separate from your dues - *by law*).
- Run for a seat on the PAC – help decide which candidates get endorsed!
- Participate in helping to elect a candidate, once an endorsement is made! ■

## Bargaining Unit Updates (continued)

Ongoing issues are closing of a unit and floating of nurses; unjust discipline for use of sick time; and management targeting certain staff for disciplinary actions. MNA is in constant dialogue with management to correct these issues and file grievances on behalf of the affected nurses.

**Radius—Quincy** submitted by Deborah Ryan. We are starting negotiations. Our contract ends 3/31/10 but we will probably extend the contract.

**Somerville Hospital** submitted by Lisa Valley-Shaw. Held a representative meeting which was a great opportunity for reps to introduce themselves to one another. Some reps are at off-site clinics in the surrounding community. Went over rep responsibilities and goals for coming year. Pre-negotiation meetings held. Were told that 2011 will be a "survivor year."

**Tufts Medical Center** submitted by Cathy Proctor. Held an informational picket to highlight our concerns with unsafe staffing related to the new care delivery model. This change has increased our nurse to patient ratio to as many as 1:7 with plans to augment with unlicensed personnel. We are continuing with an escalating strategy which will lead up to negotiations where staffing ratios will be on the table. Our pediatric

psychiatry unit has closed. During the RIF process, management chose to ignore the seniority bumping grid in our contract, instead offering severance packages to a number of nurses in exchange for a release of all claims against the hospital. You can be sure this issue will be addressed at upcoming negotiations! In an attempt to accommodate the growing need for ICU beds, the medical center designated PACU beds to be used for these patients. A phone

call to DPH resulted in a visit by them. They determined that these beds were being used inappropriately and the practice of admitting non-anesthesia patients to these beds has been halted.

**Whidden Memorial Hospital** submitted by Carla Cerrato. We are starting to put together proposals for negotiations. The contract expires June 30, 2010. We will be having elections sometime in April. Our parking violation filed at the labor board is still pending.

**Unit 7 Representative** submitted by Steve Robins. The Lemuel Shattuck Hospital-DPH is the largest of all the Unit 7 sites with over 190 members; we also have the DMH part and Mass Mental sharing space as well. As an acute care facility, with acute care issues, we struggle to keep organized. There have been several issues that have arisen and Kevin Hayes of MNA has made himself available to address all of them. Currently we are protected by an expired contract, and to be honest, are not too eager for a new one. The state is not looking to offer anything we might want, nor are we willing to give up what they would like to take from us. We are one of the few state unions that chose to hold off on a new contract. The state has not as yet honored the ones they did negotiate with other unions. ■

MNA REGIONAL COUNCIL 5  
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TO VOLUNTEER  
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# Save the Dates



*For more information on any of these events, contact the Region 5 office.*

## Future Council Meetings:

Wednesday, May 26, 2010 @ 6 p.m.  
Wednesday, July 21, 2010 @ 6 p.m.  
Wednesday, September 22, 2010 @ 6 p.m.

## Region 5-Hosted CE Program

Surgical & Neurological Complications  
April 29, 2010 @ 8:30 a.m.

*Happy Nurses Day -May 6, 2010*

## MNA Annual Awards

Deadline for receipt of nominations:  
May 12, 2010

## MNA Nursing Clinical Conference

Worcester DCU Center  
May 14, 2010

## MNA Consent to Serve Forms

Applications must be postmarked:  
June 1, 2010

## MNF Scholarships

Applications must be postmarked:  
June 1, 2010

## Dorchester Day Parade

Join or watch us as we march down Dorchester Ave.  
June 6, 2010 @ 1 p.m.

## Region 5 Movie Night

Film: *With Babies and Banners*  
June 8, 2010 @ 5:30 p.m.

## MNF Golf Tournament

LeBaron Hills Country Club, Lakeville, MA  
July 19, 2010 @ 8 a.m.

## Susan G. Komen Three-Day for the Cure

Join us as medical crew or medical day volunteer  
July 23-25, 2010

## Canton Block Party

Visit our informational booth  
September 25, 2010

## MNA Convention

Worcester DCU Center  
October 13-15, 2010



**Please bring non-perishable item(s) when you attend council meetings and CE programs hosted by MNA Region 5.**

*Chemical Sensitivity: Scents may trigger responses in those with chemical sensitivities. Men and women are requested to avoid wearing scented personal products when attending MNA meetings/programs.*



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