



Newsletter

Benchmark language negotiated for nursing unit assistants

After nearly a year of meetings with health employers, the union has negotiated a new benchmark for nursing unit coordinators - and a new job title.

The new Nursing Unit Assistant benchmark acknowledges the role these health professionals play in prioritizing and coordinating the activities of the nursing unit.

The benchmark more clearly identifies the functions carried out by Nursing Unit Assistants in providing communications links and collaborating with other departments and facilities and with a variety of members of the health care team.

What now remains is the negotiation of a new rate of pay to match the responsibilities contained in the new benchmark. That will be on the agenda of future meetings with health employers and may be an issue in the upcoming round of collective bargaining.

The new benchmark language is currently being prepared for distribution to worksites, and will be made available on the union website as soon as it is available.

“Our next fight will clearly be to challenge the R9 pay code for the Nursing Unit Assistant,” says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

“Securing language that matches the critical roles and responsibilities of these health care professionals will help us win that fight.”

One of the most difficult challenges for the committee was establishing an appropriate title for the benchmark.

Health employers made it very clear from the start that they would not agree to include the term “coordinator” in the benchmark title.

A canvass of members produced a range of alternative job titles including unit clerk, unit coordinator assistant, unit regulatory assistant, certified health clerical coordinator and nursing unit assistant.

The union committee determined that Nursing Unit Assistant was the best fit for the benchmark given health employers’ refusal to budge on “coordinator.”

“Real recognition for the jobs we do needs to appear on our pay stubs,” says Darcy. “We’ve established a benchmark that will help us get that recognition.”

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