

# William D. Ruckelshaus Center Nurse Staffing Steering Committee



February 18, 2011

## 2010 Accomplishments

On February 4, 2008, the Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives; SEIU Healthcare 1199NW; United Staff Nurses Union, Local 141, UFCW; the Washington State Hospital Association; and the Washington State Nurses Association entered into a unique Memorandum of Agreement to address nurse staffing concerns, an approach untried in any other state in the nation. Representatives of the five organizations (the "Steering Committee") were convened by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to address serious challenges related to nurse staffing. Many of the committee's projects have been successful, but much remains to be done.

During 2010, the Steering Committee accomplished the following:

- The parties have continued to meet monthly as a statewide Steering Committee to discuss key issues concerning hospital nurse staffing and its effects on patient safety and quality of care.
- The Steering Committee conducted a second statewide survey of hospital nurse staffing committee members concerning the structure, effectiveness and operation of nurse staffing committees. The survey results are not yet final.
- The Education Advisory Committee conducted four training sessions in Lynnwood, Renton, Spokane, and Wenatchee for nurse staffing committee members on "Bringing Your Nurse Staffing Committees to Life: A Workshop on Staffing, Scheduling and Budgeting for the Bedside Clinician." These training sessions reached 38 nurse staffing committees and 191 participants, including 96 staff nurses.
- The five Steering Committee representatives developed and adopted the enclosed Vision Statement.

## 2011 Agreements

The parties agree that in 2011 they will discuss the issue of nurse fatigue and meal/rest breaks under the Ruckelshaus Center process in lieu of pursuing legislative action. The parties also agree that during 2011 they will engage in: (1) a collaborative dialogue and education initiative regarding the issue of health care provider fatigue and nurse meal/rest breaks and (2) a policy development process concerning meal/rest breaks.

In 2011, the parties have agreed to continue their efforts through the Steering Committee to strengthen the work of the nurse staffing committees and improve hospital nurse staffing and quality. The parties will continue to foster respectful dialogue and problem-solving among staff nurses, hospital administrators, nurse managers, and others.

## William D. Ruckelshaus Center Nurse Staffing Steering Committee



December 16, 2010

## Vision Statement

The Ruckelshaus Nurse Staffing Steering Committee – comprising hospital management and nursing union representatives – envisions a future where each hospital in Washington State has a collaborative, respectful, and fully active nurse staffing committee contributing to a healthy work environment for all nurses. Nurse staffing committees serve as a critical way by which hospital nursing staffing issues are addressed and resolved. This means staff nurses and nurse managers work together to prepare realistic and effective staffing plans that are budgeted for and approved by chief executive officers. As a result of this process, staff nurses, nurse managers, and hospital executives share a common understanding of: (1) the staffing and budgeting process; (2) how the staffing budget fits in the context of the hospital budget; and (3) how staffing affects safe and quality care and patient outcomes.

In this future, the health outcomes for patients are improving, as evidenced by Nurse Sensitive Quality Indicators data and other quality measures. Throughout Washington State, hospital nurses have the staffing they need every day to provide safe and quality care for their patients, and job satisfaction among staff nurses is high, resulting in high retention rates. All nurses, management and staff stand together whenever possible to address issues of public concern related to nursing care. In conjunction with these outcomes, hospitals are financially healthy and able to meet community health care needs and provide necessary community services.