

MNA Regional Council 4

ANNUAL REPORT TO OUR MEMBERS

October 2019

Officers

Chair Patricia Comeau, Methuen School Nurses Chair

Vice Chair Brian Zahn, Lemuel Shattuck Hospital

Treasurer David Guiney, Tewksbury Hospital DPH Chair, Unit 7 representative

Secretary Norma Ouellette, Lawrence General Hospital

Other Members of Regional Council 4

Janice Bacon-Zega/Terri Furlong, Wilmington School Nurses Co-Chairs

Gayle Burke/Karen Powers, Holy Family Hospital Methuen Co-Chairs

Liz Collins, Northeast Hospital

Jane Emery/Julia O'Brien, Holy Family Hospital Merrimack Valley Co-Chairs

Tracy Fernald, Bedford Public Health Chair

Susan Hall/Carol Medico, Northeast Hospital Co-Chairs

Travis Libman/Laurie Spheekas, Lawrence General Hospital Co-Chairs

Bonnie MacAdams, Haverhill School Nurses Chair

Kay Marshall, Anna Jaques Hospital, Region 4 Member of MNA Board of Directors

Tammy Normand, Gloucester School Nurses Chair

Kathy Schevis/Kellie O'Brien, North Shore Medical Center/Salem Hospital Co-Chairs

Staff

Peggy O'Malley, Region 4 Office Manager

Activities and Accomplishments 2018-2019

Legislative/Political Action

Last fall, our Region 4 office was the local hub of organizing and the "Get Out the Vote" campaign for Yes on Question 1 for Safe Patient Care for our members, for other nurses from all over the North Shore and the general public who helped tremendously. Our hearts were broken at the outcome on election night. In January, a large group of nurses and others who had participated in the campaign gathered in our office for a very helpful debriefing discussion with MNA President Donna Kelly Williams, Executive Director Julie Pinkham and other MNA staff.

Collective Bargaining

A portion of every monthly meeting of Regional Council 4 is devoted to reports from our twelve bargaining units to help Chairs and members solve problems and develop strategies that will have a favorable impact on all of our members and patients.

The nurses of Northeast Hospital held 19 contract negotiation sessions with hospital management at our Lynnfield office between January and June of this year, resulting in a fair three-year contract which was ratified overwhelmingly. Our office provided a professional, comfortable, and convenient setting for the Committee, the many other nurses who participated, and the management team.

Region 4 continues to use money from our Reserves to help our bargaining units pay for activities that promote collective bargaining, member involvement, continuing education, or legislative/political action. The Northeast Hospital member outreach dinners held in local restaurants over the past two years contributed to much greater member participation in successful contract negotiations this year. At the request of the Co-Chair of Wilmington School Nurses for help fostering unity among nurses who work in different schools, Region 4 reimbursed their expenses to have dinner and attend Nurses Night at Fenway together. Holy Family Hospital Co-Chairs in Methuen are planning similar union-strengthening events as they head into contract negotiations.

Labor School

The evenings when Joe Twarog, our Labor Educator, comes to Region 4 are always great. In addition to three established four-week courses this year, “The Role of the Floor Rep, Grievances and Arbitration”, “Contract Negotiations; the Collective Bargaining Process” and “Labor Law and Special Topics”, he taught a terrific one-night class on “The Importance of Union Orientation”.

Continuing Clinical Education

We continued to have outstanding attendance at a total of seven CE programs this year. Last Fall, over 250 nurses attended our final “Domestic and Sexual Violence” program at Methuen High School. The six other CE programs at Danversport Yacht Club, covered “Autoimmune Disease: Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus”, “Nurse Burnout”, “Parkinson’s Disease”, “Substance Use by Health Care Professionals”, “Conflict Resolution in the Workplace”, and “Cannabis (Medical Marijuana)”. We are always very grateful to Mary Sue Howlett for her incredible guidance and support to make our programs so successful.

Financial

Operating Income and Expenses

We have about 4,500 Region 4 members each of whom pays \$30/year in Regional dues. That income, about \$134,000 this past fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019), was supplemented by over \$4,500 in interest and dividends on our investments of reserves (see below). In addition, we had an end-of-fiscal-year gain of over \$14,000 “market adjustment” of our reserves investments which is added to our annual income. We kept our expenses within budget. Please see the “Regional Councils” page among the MNA Financial documents in the front of this year’s MNA Annual Report for more details.

Reserve Fund

Over many decades, the Region 4 membership has accumulated significant reserve funds (savings) from operating surpluses in previous decades and income from investments. Last September, Regional Council 4 voted to give \$150,000 of our reserves to help fund the Safe Patient Limits ballot initiative. As of August of this year, the balance in our reserve fund was approximately \$204,000.

As noted above, Regional Council is eager to **distribute a significant portion of our reserves to our bargaining units to pay for local member services, benefits, activities** as determined by local Chairs and Committees. We are also open to the ideas of our members for the use of these funds in ways that benefit our Region and our members.

Goals for 2019-2020

- Increase the involvement of members in the work of our bargaining units, our Region and MNA, our union and professional association;
- Educate our leaders and members about the availability of reserve funds to our bargaining units;
- Increase attendance of Labor School;
- Pay the expenses of Region 4 union members who wish to attend the biennial “Labor Notes” Conference in Chicago.