



CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Dear Sarah,

I met with our chapter's Executive Board on Oct. 11. I want to thank them for their hard work and dedication to our chapter. Executive Board members and delegates are the backbone of our chapter. They devote a great deal of their own time to canvass our nurses and bring forward concerns and issues related to our professional growth and daily working conditions. They also participate in quarterly meetings, chapter weekends and several conferences over the course of the school year. *(See below for a list of the Executive Board members.)*

Our Executive Board keeps the lines of communication open between our nursing staff and the UFT leadership. It is imperative, especially as we await the Supreme Court's decision on Janus v. AFSCME, for us to communicate with each other and stand together in solidarity. The plaintiff and his financial backers in the case seek to starve public sector unions of the funding they need to provide services to members and to weaken unions.

I encourage all of you to keep in contact with your borough Executive Board members so that we can continue to address your concerns.

In unity,

Cathy Connolly
School Nurses Chapter Leader

Consultation with Director of Nursing

1. Safe auto-injectors for allergic reactions:

UFT consultant Liz Truly, PM staffer BJ Darby, Director of Nursing Gail Adman and I met for consultation on Oct. 11.

We addressed the issue of safe epinephrine auto-injectors for students who arrive in school with generic devices. At this time, the Office of School Health is not replacing generic auto-injectors supplied by families who do not have safe needles. School nurses are advised to contact parents of students who have brought in a generic device without a safe needle and ask them to return them to the pharmacy; they should request a replacement device with a safe needle. According to the Office of School Health, most pharmacies have accommodated such requests. If parents of children in your school are unable to provide epinephrine devices with safe needles, you should contact your supervisor for assistance.

If a student does not have an epinephrine auto-injector with a safe needle, the student may be unable to go on a school trip if a nurse is unavailable. Parents need to understand this issue as does the pharmacist. The Office of School Health will be sending out a memo with more details, but I wanted to bring it to your attention first.

This issue developed when the manufacturer of the EpiPen raised the price significantly and insurance companies resisted the high cost. Initially, the only available generic device did not have a safe needle. That has now changed.

I will continue to update you on this important issue in follow-up emails and on our website.

2. Paperwork associated with training responsibilities:

We have discussed how to streamline the EpiPen paperwork many times in consultation meetings. Adman acknowledged how time consuming both the paperwork and auto-injector training can be. The Office of School Health is looking into an electronic system to make this training process easier. In the meantime, if you are having difficulty completing your EpiPen training for staff, contact your supervisor for assistance.

3. Nursing coverage:

Adman discussed the difficulty of scheduling nurses for adequate coverage on trips. Every borough has schools that require coverage on a daily basis so providing a nurse on a trip is extremely difficult and at times impossible.

The Office of School Health has been diligent in hiring for both the Department of Education and the Department of Health; however, even with the new hires, schools still have vacancies.

Unfortunately, schools staffed with two nurses have on occasion been asked to cover another site. Adman stated schools should follow a rotation schedule to cover other sites, and supervisors have been instructed to follow this plan.

If you are pulled to cover another school, please email me at cconnolly@uft.org so the union can monitor how often this occurs.

If you are called to float to another site and travel from one school to another, you are entitled to travel reimbursement. This reimbursement is submitted through the Travel Reimbursement and Approval Certification form. Contact your nursing supervisor regarding this reimbursement form.

Six nurses attended UFT conference

Director of Nursing Gail Adman agreed to release six staff nurses on Friday, Nov. 17, so they could attend the Federation of Nurses/UFT Professional Issues Conference, which provides valuable professional development. If you attended the Professional Issues Conference on the second day, Nov. 18, make sure you filled out the appropriate paperwork for tuition reimbursement.

Remember: You must have prior approval to attend any conference on a workday. You should not use a sick day to attend any conference.

39th annual School-Related Professionals Leadership Conference

The 39th annual School-Related Professionals Leadership Conference was held at the Desmond Hotel, Albany, N.Y., on Oct. 20-22. Four of our nurses (Cynthia Bennett, Claudia Richardson-Byam, Sherry Lewis-Branch and I) attended along with school nurses and other related service personnel from around the state.

Workshops included: Gang Awareness, Illegal Substances (Current Trends in Substance Abuse), Dealing With Difficult Students in the School Environment, Best Practices in the Delivery of Mental and Behavioral Health Services, Compassion Fatigue and Medical Protocols for Medically Fragile Students.

The conference also provided a forum to discuss building a stronger union chapter, review the many additional benefits and services available to NYSUT members, and explore how to effectively plan and help organize mutually beneficial relationships with communities and community organizations.



School Nurses Chapter Leader Cathy Connolly and three nurses attended the October conference in Albany where they discussed the dangers of a state constitutional convention. Voters defeated the proposal at the polls on Nov. 7. Clockwise, from top left: Connolly, Cynthia Bennett, Sherry Lewis-Branch and Claudia Richardson-Byam.

Executive Board members

Cynthia Bennett (Queens)

Beverly Briggs (Bronx)

Janet Carter (Queens)

Ellen Sebastiano (Brooklyn)

Marie Thompson (District 75)

Jessie Warren (Queens)

Mary Whelan (Manhattan)

BJ Darby, PM Staffer

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