

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

You and your co-workers have a federally protected right to engage in union organizing activities. The National Labor Relations Board is a part of the federal government whose entire job is to protect your right to enforce your union rights. More information can be found on the NLRB website including how to file a complaint.



SCAN ME

You have the right to:

- ✓ Talk to your coworkers about the union at work to the same extent you can talk about other non-work related issues such as sports or the weather
- ✓ Read and distribute union flyers in any area where other non work-related flyers are distributed, such as party announcements or girl scout cookie sign ups
- ✓ Attend meetings to learn about the union
- ✓ Sign a union authorization card
- ✓ Ask other employees to learn about the union

Management is not allowed to:

- ✗ Threaten to or actually fire, lay-off, discipline or harass employees for engaging in union activities
- ✗ Question you about union support (yours or your coworkers) in a way that you experience as coercive or intimidating
- ✗ Threaten to withhold any benefits in exchange for you not unionizing
- ✗ Promise a benefit or pay increase in exchange for employees not unionizing
- ✗ Prevent you from talking about the union on work time
- ✗ Remove union flyers from any area where other non-work related flyers have been permitted
- ✗ Poll employees to determine their support for the union



What is the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA)?

The MNA is the largest union and the professional association for registered nurses and health care professionals in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, representing more than 23,000 members in 85 health care facilities in Massachusetts, including staff nurses in 53 of the state's 67 acute care hospitals. Founded in 1903 to establish the profession of nursing in Massachusetts, the MNA is responsible for the passage of nearly every law governing and protecting clinical nursing practice, including the recent passage of landmark laws to ban the practice of mandatory overtime for RNs and legislation to set safe patient limits for nurses working in hospital ICUs.

MNA is excited to help nurses in New Hampshire begin to organize to improve conditions in the state.



781.821.4625 • www.massnurses.org

What are the things management always says when workers talk about

ORGANIZING A UNION?



QUIT LYING!
WE CAN SPOT A-FIB!

When hospital administrations find out that nurses are organizing a union, they hire expensive (approx. \$3000/day) management consultants whose entire job is to stop nurses from organizing. Through mandatory meetings, flyers, letters, videos and scripted one-on-one meetings with nurse managers, anti-union consultants communicate their message of fear and futility.

What they say:

1 The underlying message of everything that the union busters will do and say is that **the union is a third party** that will come between you and management.

A union is actually just you and your coworkers organized for a collective voice to advocate for yourselves and your patients. Once you win your union election, you will distribute bargaining surveys to each and every nurse, form a representative bargaining committee, formulate a set of proposals for your first contract in order to improve standards in the hospital and sit down with management to negotiate improvements.

All decisions about your contract are made by nurses at your hospital and unlike any hospital based committees, management can't ignore the input of unionized nurses.



What else will they say:

2 **We had no idea there was a problem. Give us a chance and we'll make everything right.**

- Anti-union management consultants advise hospital administrators to go to each nurse and ask for a second chance.
- They make promises that things will improve.
- They give raises, improve benefits, and restore cut-backs.
- They may even fire an unpopular Director of Nursing or CEO, and hire someone new whose job it will be to ask for a second chance.

3 **You'll lose flexibility.**

- Anti-union consultants know that nurses value flexibility. So they'll make phony threats to take away self-scheduling, weekend programs, anything that makes your life as a nurse easier.
- Just remember, once you're organized, management can't make any changes to how things work now.

4 **You start from "scratch" in negotiations.**

- Management will say that you start with a blank slate at negotiations, and that you could lose benefits that you care about. Remember, you start with what you have now, and work from there in the negotiating process.
- **Consider this: if management really thought you would lose by organizing, why are they desperately fighting your attempt to organize?**

5 **Union dues are...**

- While management never seemed to care how you spent your money before you started talking about organizing, now they're very concerned about how much you may contribute to your organization in union dues.
- Nurses at your hospital will pay nothing in dues until a contract has been negotiated and ratified by all the nurses. That means that you pay dues only after you've voted on a contract that contains the kinds of improvements to salaries, benefits, and working conditions that will make nurses want to stay at your hospital.
- MNA dues for RNs at a New Hampshire hospital would be two times the entry level base hourly rate in the contract that will be negotiated by your bargaining committee and voted on by all members. For reference, the average of this number at MNA hospitals in Massachusetts is \$70.16/month (where there is also an upper range that would not apply to DHMC nurses). Reduced dues are available for nurses who work under 980 hours per year, students, new grads and members who are 62 years of age or older and not earning more than social security allows.

6 **The union will make you abandon your patients and go on strike.**

- Going on strike is the most effective tool nurses have to get management to do the right thing. Only nurses at your hospital can decide to go on strike and you would only choose to strike if an overwhelming majority of nurses at your hospital voted to do so.
- Federal law requires nurses to give a full ten days' notice before they strike. At that point, legal responsibility for the care of patients is transferred from the nurses to the hospital. The hospital must make alternative arrangements for the patients, including transferring them to other hospitals and rescheduling elective procedures. Hospitals also hire expensive, out of state companies to provide temporary replacement nurses.

7 **We don't have any money, so it's futile to organize.**

- Hospitals like to talk about how little money they're making. However, nurses see ways that money is wasted every day—money that would be better spent on nurse retention and patient care.
- When you're organized, you have a say in how the money is spent. You also have access to information about the hospital's real finances and help from union experts to find out where the money is really going.
- Management often makes promises of money, benefits, or promotions to employees who will speak out against organizing.
- Sometimes nurses even claim to have had a bad experience in the past with a union. Management may also try to form a "Vote No" committee of nurses who will be encouraged to use work time to fight their co-workers' attempts to organize, all in an attempt to keep things just the way they are right now.

8 **Management often makes promises of money, benefits, or promotions to employees who will speak out against organizing.**

- Sometimes managers, consultants, or others claim to have had a bad experience in the past with a union (often a different union, or in a different state or industry). Management may also try to form a "Vote No" committee of employees who will be encouraged to use work time to fight their co-workers' attempts to organize, all in an attempt to keep things just the way they are right now.
- Promises are often made to individuals and groups, and just as often broken.

9 **The union can't do anything about staffing...**

- There are many ways that MNA nurses can and address staffing issues through their union.
- Documentation-Objection and Documentation of Unsafe Staffing/Unsatisfactory Patient Care—these forms are a tool that allow the RN to document unsafe conditions that put patients at risk (i.e. unsafe floating, too few nurses) and to document that management was formally notified of the nurse's concerns. The forms are admissible in court and are protected under federal labor law.
 - MNA nurses negotiate patient care and staffing related language into their contracts. A few examples are: enforceable ratios for RNs and ancillary staff, restrictions and guidelines on floating, right to refuse mandatory overtime, staffing committees that meet with management to review unsafe staffing forms.
 - MNA nurses have patient advocacy protections. As a union nurse, you will no longer be an "at will" employee. This means that you can only be disciplined for just cause and cannot be retaliated against for insisting on adequate staffing and safe practices.

10 **The union will harass you.**

- First of all, the union is the nurses. The goal of the union busters during your union organizing campaign is to create an atmosphere of fear and confusion. While you have the right to organize and talk to your co-workers about the union at work, as you would about anything else in your life, management will make it very clear that they don't want you to unionize. This makes some people afraid to be openly supportive of the union while at work. Your organizing committee may decide to hold union meetings away from the hospital or visit people at home in order to have an open conversation about the benefits of forming a union and why you will be stronger together.

