WHAT “JUST CAUSE” MEANS TO A UNION NURSE

Just cause protection is the keystone of the collective bargaining agreement, and NNOC contracts at both Tenet and HCA-affiliated hospitals provide nurses with this protection. By imposing rigorous conditions on the employer’s disciplinary actions, just cause ensures fair treatment and maintains the rights and benefits of the nurses.

Here are the seven basic principles contained within just cause:

| Fair Notice: You may NOT be disciplined for violating a rule or standard whose nature and penalties have not been made known. |
| Equal Treatment: The employer may NOT assess a considerably stronger punishment against you than it assessed against another known to have committed the same or substantially similar offense, unless a valid distinction justifies the higher penalty. |
| Prior Enforcement: You may NOT be penalized for violating a rule or standard that the employer has failed to enforce in the past. |
| Progressive Discipline: The employer MUST issue at least one level of discipline that allows you an opportunity to improve, unless misconduct is egregious. |
| Due Process: The employer MUST conduct an interview/hearing before issuing discipline, MUST take action promptly, and MUST list charges precisely. |
| Mitigating and Extenuating Circumstances: Discipline MUST be proportional to the gravity of the offense, taking into account any mitigating, extenuating, or aggravating circumstance. |
| Substantial Proof: Charges against you MUST be proven by substantial and credible evidence. |

IT IS EVERY NURSE’S BUSINESS TO UPHOLD AND ENFORCE JUST CAUSE. NNOC LEADERS COMPLETED TRAINING THIS MONTH TO HELP YOU DO JUST THAT.

RECENT JUST CAUSE GRIEVANCES WIN REINSTATEMENT AND BACK PAY

ER nurse Joanne Gray (LEFT) from Osceola Regional Medical Center was fired for refusing a drug test after the hospital suspected her of discrepancies of “high variances” when pulling medications. The union argued that the company did not prove its case, and RN Gray won four weeks back pay and a document from the hospital stating that no missing medications or Pyxis discrepancies were found. RN Gray chose not to return to work for this employer.

RN Michelle Preusser was greeted by NNOC leaders upon her return to North Side Hospital in July. The union won RN Preusser’s job back after proving that the company violated her just cause rights.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Fawcett Memorial Hospital nurses Heather Skorowski, 4th floor and Nurse Rep Pam Smith, ICU. Skorowski was wrongly terminated. Pam Smith took up the just cause grievance and was able to convince management that their decision was mistaken. Heather was reinstated with back pay.

ABOVE: Grievance Committee members and other leaders from all NNOC-Florida organized facilities met in Tampa on Thursday, August 8 in a day-long session to discuss how to handle grievances arising from unjust disciplines.

Continued on the back
Continued from the front

**FLORIDA NURSES ON THE MOVE AROUND THE STATE**

**At Fawcett Memorial Hospital, Port Charlotte**

RN June Phillips, the nurse rep in Spine/Ortho, was wrongly sent home from her shift when she questioned management about staffing. June had discovered that management was planning to send a CNA home early despite there being plenty of work for the CNA. June simply questioned the house supervisor, who became angry. The union filed a grievance immediately and within days June was given pay for the hours she missed. There is no discipline in her record.

**At Peace River Hospital, Punta Gorda**

**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Fawcett nurse leaders Miriam Long, Lorraine Dale, Pam Smith, and Mike Boccio distributed flyers at Peace River Hospital.

**From Jacksonville to Sanford**

RN Rita Valenti (RIGHT), founding member of NNOC from Atlanta Georgia, coordinated medical assistance during the March4Dignity last month.

**At Orlando Health**

Non-union nurses and other hospital workers petitioned against a big cut in shift differential after the hospital refused to negotiate with employees. Some nurses will take up to a $15,000 a year wage cut. NNOC union contracts do not allow cuts in wages. There might be a lesson there—collective bargaining works.

**At Oak Hill Hospital, Brooksville**

Grievance results in back pay for stand-by hours and for overtime improperly denied during call-in. **LEFT TO RIGHT:** RNs Carmen Rosado, Nurse Rep Cheryl Johnson, Kathy Harper, and Gail Downs.

**At Largo Medical Center, Largo**

Mediation on a staffing proposal made by NNOC results in the CNO agreeing to establishing a 90-day trial period to add a dedicated Rapid Response nurse in MICU. **LEFT TO RIGHT:** RNs Bobbie Smith, Karen Westfall-Torres, Stefan Kujawa, Christine Coppola, Julia Scott, and Kurt Busse.

**At Central Florida Regional Hospital, Sanford**

A step 1 grievance meeting resulted in back pay for an RN improperly called-off. **LEFT TO RIGHT:** Nurse Rep Karyn Hayduh, RN Bibi Khan, and Nurse Rep Karen Wildberger.

**STATE MEETING IN TAMPA**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1**

➤ WILL FOCUS ON RN STAFFING