Safe staffing was a top priority in forming the Union at Largo Medical Center. Nurses continue to work diligently on monitoring the staffing levels on each unit and ensure safe staffing at all times. In August, the Staffing Committee was presented with staffing matrices for two new low-census Behavioral Health units. There are no regular Registered Nurses included on either staffing matrix until a census of nine patients. This means Charge Nurses will be doing the work of the RNs instead of RNs doing that work. The contract prohibits replacing bargaining unit nurses with Supervisory Nurses because the unintended consequence is that any census over 9 will likely be staffed with floats or agency—because regular bargaining unit RNs will not want to stay working on the unit if the CN gets all the hours and the regular RNs get called off first for low census days. The Staffing Committee immediately called for a meeting with management and objected to the proposed staffing plan. The Staffing Committee will take this issue to Mediation as called for in the NNOC contract.

What did NNOC do this month?
- Recently, the hospital started a pattern of asking nurses to submit to fitness for duty exams. One nurse was being sent for the exam after she had already been cleared for work and been back to work for 4 months. NNOC Chief Nurse Rep, Julia Scott, argued her case and the hospital backed down. Another nurse was sent for the exam because there was a complaint about the ability to hear clearly. Once the hearing test was passed, the company decided that they wanted a complete fit for duty exam. NNOC argued this was not fair or necessary and the hospital backed down. If you get called for a fit for duty exam, contact your NNOC Nurse Rep immediately.
- The hospital combined the General PACU unit and the FKOP units eliminating the positions in the old units. NNOC Nurse Reps invoked the “Reduction of Force” and “Filling of Vacancy” language in the contract and the nurses were allowed to review all job openings they were qualified for and fill those positions based on seniority.

NNOC and LMC meet to discuss Nurse Education Programs
NNOC Nurse Rep Gerry Beyer attended discussions regarding the new StarRN program. NNOC’s position is that training should enhance nurses’ skills and improve patient care while not making individual nurses indebted to the hospital. We are opposed to lengthy commitment periods with large “repayment penalties.” NNOC has also proposed that educational opportunities be offered to current nurses as well as new hires. While negotiations continue on this issue, any nurse participating in existing programs with “repayment penalties” will not be required to repay those penalties.

Contract Negotiating Team
In order to achieve a strong contract Nurses must work together to build a strong Union. Your newly elected Negotiating Team requests your support and asks for your willingness to work with us to unite behind the common goals of safe patient care, economic justice and respect for nurses and the patients. The Leadership Council of NNOC at Largo Medical Center elected the following Negotiating Team for the NNOC Contract:

Karen Westfall-Torres, Gerald Beyer, and Julia Scott

Upcoming NNOC meetings
Conference room
September 16, 6pm to 9pm Location TBA (all RNs welcome)

NNOC Leadership Council/PPC meeting
October 7, 8 am Hospital Cafeteria (all members welcome)