

## The Power of Speaking Up: PTO Victory in CVICU

Our union contract guarantees certain rights, including our wages, benefits, and working conditions. We sit down with management every few years to renegotiate our contract and use **OUR** voice as nurses to speak up. This helps us set the ground rules for our practice and nursing policies in our workplace. **Our contract is only as strong as our willingness to speak up, so when we stand together and use our voice, it's a victory for us all.**

Andrea Richards, a nurse in CVICU who has been at UMHS for the past 5 years, recently had one such victory. "I signed up for an 'OA day' over the Labor Day holiday, because I am trying to put away extra PTO time for my maternity leave," remembers Andrea. "There were two of us who were interested in working that day, and by the seniority and number of overtime hours we have set in our contract, I was first in line to work."

Andrea ended up being cancelled that day, but later found out that the cancellation was in error and she should have worked.

"When I found out that I was cancelled but someone else was able to work in my place, I was disappointed. It was an honest mistake, and no one is to blame or should feel bad, but I was counting on having those extra hours for my maternity leave. **I've never really used our contract for a workplace issue before, but I approached my area union rep who knows a lot about it and asked her for help.**"

Andrea wasn't quite sure what to expect. "I always thought about 'the union' and our contract as being more remote. I knew they were there for me, but never thought about going that route for help. It was such an easy process, though, and my coworker was really able to help me through it. We collected information for our argument, and then used the grievance resolution process in our contract. We sat down with management to make our case, and ultimately arrived at a happy outcome. **I was awarded the 18 PTO hours I should have earned for working that day.**"

When asked what advice she would give other nurses who are unfamiliar with our union, Andrea said, "We all deserve to have someone we can trust to turn to - that's why our union is here. **We all need to take advantage of the support of our fellow nurses. The contract can be difficult to read, so talk to our nurse reps, officers, and union leaders. When we work together, we can win.** I know there are probably people out there with big concerns of their own, and they should speak up, too."

"It's exciting knowing I have someone on my unit I can go to for help understanding and enforcing the contract, and seeing what we can accomplish together," said Andrea. For more information on this specific issue, check out Article 32 in our contract. If you're unsure who to talk to about a workplace concern, or would like to get more involved with UMPNC/MNA, please call 734-663-5657.

## Want to Get More Involved with UMPNC/MNA?

The strength of our union comes directly from having an engaged and empowered membership. UMPNC/MNA nurses are among some of the most passionate and dedicated healthcare professionals around. **Our strong commitment to patient care and a safe nursing practice is a fundamental cornerstone of our union.** We are always looking for new members who are ready to develop new skills and take on leadership roles, so that our nurses can continue being strong patient advocates and partners in UMHS decision-making.

The continuing strength of our contract and rights at work depends on nurses who are willing to stand up and defend them. **If you've ever wanted to learn more about our contract or how you can be a leader in empowering nurses in our hospital, this is your chance.**

If you're interested in contributing to our voice on the job, please contact the UMPNC office or call MNA organizer Kelly Anthony at 517-853-5521.

## MemberLink: A New Tool for UMPNC Nurses

MemberLink is a new way for UMPNC/MNA nurses to gain access to all of the important files and documents that we need. Logging in to MemberLink allows nurses to view our union's contract & bylaws, access ADO & grievance forms, find contact information for your union officers, your MNA CE history, quickly update your contact information, find past dues payments and PAC contributions, and more, all in one location.

MemberLink is designed to help bring the power of our union to the fingertips of every UMPNC/MNA nurse. Create an account and begin taking advantage of MemberLink at: <https://members.minurses.org>

**UMPNC** an affiliate  
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# Question About our Contract? Ask “Eugene Union”

Hi! I’m “Eugene Union,” an RN and UMPNC member. UMPNC has asked me to appear regularly in our newsletter. I love our contract and study it every chance I get, so I’m the perfect fit. If you have a question about unions or the contract, I’m here to help demystify the whole thing. Submit your question at [umpnc.org](http://umpnc.org) and I’ll answer as many as possible in our newsletter. Here’s our first question:



Dear “Eugene Union,”

I have heard some of the Union Reps talk about my **Weingarten Rights**. I thought Weingarten was an outdoor equipment store. Do I really need to know about this “Weingarten” and how does it influence my nursing practice?

Sincerely, Worried About Weingarten

Dear Worried About Weingarten,

**Weingarten Rights** are one of your central rights as a union employee and you should know how to use them. Union employees won this right by a Supreme Court decision, and it guarantees us the right to union representation during an investigatory interview. **Here’s how Weingarten works:** if a supervisor asks to talk to you, you can ask if the discussion might lead to discipline. If the answer is “yes,” then you have the right to ask for your Union Rep to be present in the meeting. You cannot be punished for asking for representation. **However, brothers and sisters, you must ask!** Management is under no obligation to remind you of your rights.

Once you have invoked your **Weingarten Rights**, the employer can react in three ways:

1. Grant your request and wait for union representation.
2. Deny the request and end the interview immediately.
3. Give you a choice between meeting without union representation, or postponing until your rep can attend the meeting.

Not only do we have these rights protected by law, **but it is in our contract as well:** paragraph 498 details your rights to have “Representation by Association.” Our collective bargaining agreement specifies if a rep is not available, you can “postpone and reschedule within (24) hours or on the next mutual working day.”

Did you think of a question? Send it to **Eugene Union** at [umpnc.org](http://umpnc.org) and look for the answer in an upcoming newsletter.

## What is Nurses MARCH?

Nurses MARCH! is an annual day for us to come together for educational and political action opportunities. RNs and nursing students from around Michigan gather to hear about pro-nurse legislation, learn from experts about public policy, and gain the skills we need to be effective legislative advocates for ourselves, our coworkers, and our patients. Last year, hundreds of nurses heard speakers like Sean Clarke, RN, PhD, FAAN, one of the foremost experts on the positive effects of safe nurse staffing on patient safety.

“Every nurse should attend Nurses MARCH! I love standing up with my nursing peers to assert our value and power to legislators. **As nurses, we know that our health and safety at work impacts our professional lives, personal well-being, and the needs of our patients,**” says UMPNC Nurse Rep. and member Katie Scott, RN. “When we come together as a profession, people take notice and it only makes us all stronger. See you in March!”



UMPNC Nurse Rep. Katie Scott and Vice Chair Heather Roe at the 2015 MARCH



## 2017 Nurses MARCH! Wednesday March 22, 2017 Lansing Center and the Capitol Lansing, MI

This is our chance to show nurse power and advocate for ourselves, our patients and our profession. Join hundreds of RNs and nursing students from all around Michigan for this special day of education and action for:

- Speakers
- Rally on the Capitol steps
- Advocacy tips
- Q & A with legislators

Put in a request for time off work today, and look for more info soon: [minurses.org](http://minurses.org).