

ONA WINS



SUMMARY OF ANOTHER SUCCESS AS YOUR UNION STRIVES TO IMPROVE YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS

PRC Settlement Results in Positive Changes for Endo Nurses

ONA has achieved a significant Professional Practice Complaint (PRC) settlement at Cambridge Memorial Hospital that will ensure nurses are able to provide safe patient care on the Endoscopy Unit.

Since late 2007, the Endo Unit has had its own dedicated staff on weekday day shifts. Prior to that, the Operating Room (OR) staff rotated through Endo for all elective and emergent cases. In early 2012, the employer cut regular Endo hours and required the OR standby team of one RN and one RPN to provide coverage for after-hours Endo procedures, meaning the RN was responsible for monitoring sedated patients and circulating, while the RPN was in the scrub role. This was a direct contravention of Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada standards, which state an RN must remain with a sedated patient at all times and have no other responsibilities, and that an additional RN is needed to perform the circulating role. The OR nurses had not rotated through Endo for five years and felt they did not have the knowledge, skills and judgment to provide after-hours standby coverage.

In addition, all hires into the OR since 2007 had not received orientation or training to the Endo department or procedures. Despite a flurry of workload forms from the nurses, management seemed hesitant to find a resolution until we discussed our concerns with the CEO and apprised him of the seriousness of the situation. If unresolved, we would likely end up at an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) hearing. Our discussion seemed to assist, and suddenly the Chief Nurse Executive began to attend meetings to discuss the issues. After a series of meetings between ONA and the employer, the Minutes of Settlement were signed earlier this year.

Resolutions of the settlement, which will be reviewed in three months for completion and 12 months for effectiveness and sustainability, resulted in substantial improvements, including:

- ONA RNs will be permanent members of the hospital's Endo Utilization Committee.
- Anesthesia coverage will be provided for all off-hour Endo procedures or a second RN will be present to monitor the patient.
- All OR RNs will receive training/refresher training in Endo procedures, which will be included in training for future hires.
- OR RNs will rotate through Endo as part of their regular rotation during regular Endo hours.
- Appropriate new policies and guidelines will be developed.

"This settlement is crucial because it clarifies proper RN staffing and support for after-hours surgical procedures and the importance of ongoing education and training in the maintenance of nursing knowledge, skills and judgment," said ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud. "It also proves that ONA is making meaningful changes to your working lives – and all without the use of an IAC. We look forward to working with the employer on implementing these very positive changes."

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