



First Choice
Staffing Solutions, LLC



Newsletter

January 2007

Vic's 'Blog'

Topping the World Health Organization's list of proposed Patient Safety Solutions in 2007 is LASA (Look-alike, sound-alike medications). It's not that the problem hasn't been around and recognized for a while, it's just that now it will get some kind of 'official' international attention.

Actually, LASA isn't a solution – it's the problem that is calling for a solution. Quite a few suggestions are included in the draft that will be open for public comments this month, but the ones that are 'closest to home' include making ourselves aware of LASA pairs and encouraging patients to be aware of their medications, especially if there are similar sounding drugs around. You can check out the whole list of Patient Safety Solutions, and the detailed recommendations, at www.jcipientientsafety.org/
BIRTHDAYS!

First Choice actually has *two* Nurses born on the First of the year: Elaine Williams and Jackie Wyche. We also send best wishes out to Sarah Stanley (1/5), Karen Jones (1/11), Shirley Davis, Tammy Goolsby and Lorene Hansen (1/12), Julie Beamon (1/13), Linda McKee (1/18), Cathy Williams (1/19), Mel Soutar and Pam Collins (1/20), Kathy Watson (1/21), Teresa Edge (1/23), Lisa McCormick and Marietta Ford (1/25), and Rachel French Eubanks (1/31.) We wish you each a wonderful Birthday.



Tammy's Corner

January 31, 2007 is the expiration date on many RNs' licenses. We will print out the on-line sheets as they are posted but please remember that we need a copy of your card as soon as you receive it. If you want to renew your license on

line, the web site is

<http://secure.sos.state.ga.us/mylicense/>

We can't leave anyone on a scheduled shift whose license isn't current on line, so get this done early in the month so there's no 'lag' in the renewal being posted.

For Your Safety

Have you ever brought home fast food, only to discover that one neatly wrapped sandwich has bread, condiments, but no meat? That's the feeling I've gotten in reviewing pieces on the subject of Violence in the Workplace. The format in the plethora of articles doesn't vary much. First there is a section on statistics proving the problem exists, most dramatically in the healthcare industry. Next, most writers enumerate the various forms of violence that can occur on the job. This is usually followed by a few paragraphs aimed at convincing employers that policy, environmental changes, employee training, reporting, recording and after-care are not only essential, but economically beneficial to the business or facility they are operating. Closing remarks include a directive that all employees should be alert and cautious for signs of potential violence.

-So, I'm asking myself, where's the meat? What I'm looking for is specific advice I can pass on to nurses who find themselves in an escalating situation. Thus far, I have found only two publications that went beyond 'the condiments': NIOSH Publication No. 2002-101 entitled "Violence – Occupational Hazards in Hospitals" (which I've got on order) and a Powerpoint presentation at the University of Vermont SIRI Safety Library website, which I'm summarizing below. The site address is: www.siri.uvm.edu

The SIRI presentation suggests ‘tactics’ that may help in de-escalating a situation that is moving towards violence:

1. Distraction – changing the subject or trying to re-focus an agitated individual’s attention on something positive (i.e. some action that’s being taken to improve the patient’s condition or comfort level).
2. “Lightening the mood – joking” (I’d take this advice with a cup of salt – as no one I know appreciates someone ‘making light’ of something they consider serious.
3. “Simply Listening” - This includes both avoiding ‘barriers to communication, like criticizing, threatening, minimizing and arguing with an agitated individual as well as actively engaging in the process of listening, by reflecting back what’s been said, asking short, relevant questions, and keeping eye contact.
4. Maintaining non-threatening position and body language.

Again, these are only a few points made at this site, so we invite you to check out the literature in full.

Carla's Comments

Are you looking to work more shifts? Particular days? – call me. If you send me your availability schedule on a regular basis, I can keep you at “the top of the list” when we get requests to fill shifts. I’m also requesting e-mail addresses, which give us another tool in keeping you informed and in touch. Also, Jackie asked me to remind you to let her know if you need an updated ID badge.

Laying the Foundation for Superior Evaluations

Some of our nurses have been faxing in copies of training rosters and/or certificates they’ve earned through independent study. This is not a ‘requirement’ to maintain active status, but rather a voluntary submission of documentation regarding their commitment to continuous learning and professional growth. These records

are kept in your individual hard-copy files, as well as being noted in our computer records. We invite everyone to send in such documentation, as it can make the difference between a ‘fully satisfactory’ and ‘superior’ overall performance evaluation.

LPN to RN Bridge Programs

Thirty years ago there was talk that soon the hospitals would eliminate the use of LPNs. We laughed. The shortage of nursing staff and the proven skill of many LPNs made the idea seem ludicrous. Today, despite the continuing shortage of nurses, we are beginning to see hospitals declining LPNs from Agencies with increasing frequency. Fair? Maybe not. Practicable? That remains to be seen. A joke? *Not any more.* Last year I ran a brief article on LPN to RN bridge programs. In light of current trends within the healthcare industry nationwide, I’m posting the area schools with bridge programs again:

ABAC, Tifton – www.abac.edu

Dalton State – www.daltonstate.edu

So GA College, Douglas – www.sga.edu

Waycross College – www.waycross.edu

Time Slip Errors

To avoid delays and/or discrepancies in receiving your pay, note these rules:

1. If you put ‘0’ in the lunch column, it must be initialed by the supervisor – entries lacking initials will be ignored.
2. Early clock-ins must also be initialed by a supervisor, otherwise the normal start time for a shift is used in calculating hours worked.
3. “CHARGED” must be written clearly beneath the area worked in order to be paid for serving as charge nurse.
4. If the area worked, time in or out is left blank, the time slip isn’t processed.
5. If you work at a facility that pays ‘travel’ you must list the number of miles you drive (ONE WAY) to the facility. Writing “Travel” or “yes” in the mileage column does not qualify you for travel pay.