

# JOINT MEMO



**To:** *Members/employees of Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH); BC Nurses' Union (BCNU)*

**From:** *Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee (VCH – BCNU)*

**Date:** *December 19, 2019*

**Subject:** *Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee - Meeting #2*

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The Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee (SNSC), comprised of representatives from both Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and the BC Nurses' Union (BCNU), meets regularly to consult on VCH nurse workforce planning including trends, activities and initiatives.

The SNSC held their inaugural meeting in July 2019. During the second meeting in October, the committee discussed the following key priorities for nurses:

- **New Graduate Nurses.** VCH shared the attached presentation outlining how new graduate nurses will be supported by the organization during their first 18 months of employment following graduation.
- **Working Short Premium** (effective April 1, 2020). This premium will compensate nurses who are working in short-staffed units. VCH and BCNU are committed to pursuing strategies that enable units and teams to achieve full staffing.
- **VCH Patient Care Assessment and Assignment Tool.** Professional Practice is leading the development of a Patient Care Assessment and Assignment Tool in order enable VCH and our nurses to successfully implement the new Working Short Premium, effective April 1, 2020. This tool will help units make necessary staffing adjustments to meet existing and anticipated patient care needs. Engagement sessions were held in November with point of care nurses, Patient Care Coordinators, Clinical Nurse Educators, managers and BCNU across VCH sites. The tool will be introduced on select units as part of a consultation and validation phase, and then modified prior to being implemented in all care areas.

Status updates include:

- **Acute:** We have agreed to have a standard template across VCH acute units (including critical care) and to develop a standardized acuity/complexity and dependency tool. Emergency and OR departments may utilize a slightly different tool.
- **Community, Long Term Care, and Ambulatory:** We are in the early stages of understanding the current state of the various community settings across the Health Authority.

- **Data.** VCH's Data Analytics team will be attending an upcoming SNSC meeting to review relevant data that is available to the committee. Examples include: overtime, sick time, working short premium, age demographics, turnover, postings, baseline positions, vacation relief and other relief positions. This data will help inform the SNSC and identify units with staffing challenges.
- **Public Health.** As we look ahead to the new working short premium (effective April 1, 2020), the SNSC invited some public health managers to discuss their preparatory efforts in reviewing the master work schedule to confirm nurse baseline and relief positions.
- **Centralized Hiring:** One of the strategies to fill nurse vacancies is to reduce the time to hire for external applicants. Coastal is piloting a centralized hiring approach for vacancies in medical and surgical units at Lions Gate Hospital. A manager is designated to review resumes, interview staff and determine which unit the applicant is most appropriate for.

You can expect regular updates from the SNSC throughout the year as we continue to work together to identify ways to best support VCH nurses, with a focus on recruitment and retention strategies, regularization of casual nursing hours, nurse education and training, season strategies and health service delivery initiatives.

Members of the committee include:

- Wayne Balshin, Executive Director, Employee Relations and Workforce Scheduling Services, VCH
- Barb Lawrie, Vice President, Professional Practice and Chief Clinical Information Officer, VCH
- David Ling, Coordinator, Servicing, BCNU
- Karin Olson, Chief Operating Officer, Coastal Community of Care, VCH
- Sara Mattu, BCNU Region Chair, Richmond-Vancouver
- Loretta Woodcock, Team Lead, Labour Relations Officer, BCNU

If you have any questions, please contact [hriquiries@vch.ca](mailto:hriquiries@vch.ca).