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## **Washington State Association for Health Care Recruitment** **Working Together - Enriching Care**

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The Washington State Association for Health Care Recruitment (WSAHCR) is a group of over eighty human resources professionals from all over the state of Washington sharing information through our bi-monthly meetings and an annual retreat.

At our meetings, members share current happenings and challenges in their respective organizations in a lively and supportive environment. In our "roundtable" discussions, we discuss the ups and downs of filling in-demand positions as staff moves from one institution to another. Rather than viewing each other as "competitors" for staff, we see each other as partners working together in a challenging field. We also invite guest speakers to update us on current trends and issues relevant to our members.

We recently had our annual educational retreat in November. This year's topics included managing multiple commitments and having difficult conversations. Since recruiting and retention are so critical in today's employment world,

two of our speakers spoke on those topics.

This is a group of human resource professionals who work to meet the needs of their organizations, seeing the big picture as well as the details. For example, we are keenly aware of the tremendous expense it is to an organization to have positions unfilled. At the same time we also know how important it is to fill them with the right candidate who will be good for patient care and an asset to the organization. Each day we balance this fine line.

Additionally, many of us are responsible for other areas of human resources, including employee and labor relations. This gives us the additional dimension of getting to know the staff and understanding their concerns. It also reinforces just how important it is to hire good candidates, treat them well, and keep them committed to the organization. At the same time, we serve as the intermediary; serving as advocate for both management and staff. All of this is critical as it addresses the ongoing challenges of employee retention. We know how critical it is to keep good employees, to provide a working environment in which they want to stay.

We are a unique group in that

while we are all working to fill similar positions, we do not look at each other as competition, *per se*. Rather, we know that we each offer something different. Some of us are from large healthcare systems, both local and national, while others are from small hospitals. We represent both urban and rural hospitals, along with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. These differences are important as they can and do affect what we can offer a prospective candidate. For some, a larger organization, with a wide variety of career paths is attractive. For others, a smaller hospital where everyone knows everyone suits his or her needs. Regardless, our aim is to hire the right person and provide an environment in which they want to stay.

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*Ms. Albano is also the Director, Human Resources for The Regional Hospital for Respiratory and Complex Care in Seattle. For more information on the Washington State Association for Health Care Recruitment, to include membership information, visit the web site at [www.wsahcr.org](http://www.wsahcr.org).*