

CRONA Associate Nurse Advocate

In order to better serve the needs of its membership, CRONA is expanding its capacity for Nurse Advocacy with the creation of a new, CRONA-appointed position: Associate Nurse Advocate.

History. Over the last 50+ years, CRONA has grown from approximately 400 nurses at one hospital in a single location to almost 4000 nurses across two hospitals and many other facilities and clinics in multiple locations from San Jose to San Francisco, and across the bay to Emeryville and Pleasanton. As the membership expanded and the workload of the Executive Board increased, CRONA adapted by periodically changing its Bylaws to increase the size of the Executive Board. Other members of the Executive Board, including the President, Vice Presidents, and Legislative Representative, decreased participation in both their primary functions and in more broadly focused leadership and representational activities in order to take on more Nurse Advocate work to meet the increased need of individual member representation.

Current State. The Executive Board now has ten members, and enough of an increase in workload to feel the need for additional assistance. However, the Board feels that the size of the Board should not be increased at this time. There is a sufficient number of Board members to conduct Board-specific CRONA business; adding more would make the Board unwieldy without offering commensurate benefit. The Board feels that a better solution is to create a new category of Nurse Advocates who are not members of the Executive Board but do represent members on a routine basis and develop deep experience in that area.

New CRONA Position. The new position of Associate Nurse Advocate will have many duties similar to the current Nurse Advocates on the CRONA Executive Board, with some differences in scope of activity and oversight.

Description of Position. There shall be two (2) Associate Nurse Advocates. The Associate Nurse Advocate's duties shall include:

- a. To be available to attend investigatory/disciplinary meetings with members, if a member requests a representative to be present as a witness or to represent the member.
- b. To assist in the administration of CRONA's Collective Bargaining Agreement(s), in coordination with the Executive Board.
- c. To represent fairly all members of the bargaining unit.
- d. To ensure that contractual commitments are fulfilled.
- e. To comply with the methods of adjusting grievances under the Agreement(s), in coordination with the Executive Board.
- f. To assist in all activities involving the handling and/or adjusting of grievances, in coordination with the Executive Board.
- g. To keep a current record file on all issues raised by members of the bargaining unit represented by the Associate Nurse Advocate, and to coordinate with the Secretary to preserve records generated by the activities of the Associate Nurse Advocate.
- h. To keep the Executive Board informed of all activities and representation of members of the bargaining unit according to established practice and procedures.
- i. To identify problem areas in the Agreement(s) and make recommendations to the Executive Board.
- j. To educate Area Representatives and members regarding rights and responsibilities under the Agreement(s).

- k. May join any CRONA committee, including the Negotiation Committee, but may not be selected as a member of the Negotiation Team.
- l. To orient the newly-appointed Associate Nurse Advocate(s).

Eligibility. No member shall be eligible for nomination or appointment to office unless that person has been in a continuous state of good standing in CRONA in accordance with Section 401 of the CRONA Bylaws.

A member of the Executive Board may not simultaneously serve as an Associated Nurse Advocate. If a member of the Executive Board submits a Consent to Serve for an open Associate Nurse Advocate position, the Board member may not participate in the selection process except as an applicant, and may not be appointed to the position unless the Board member resigns from the Executive Board.

Qualifications. No prior experience is needed; training will be provided. Must have interest in supporting nurses. New Associate Nurse Advocates will be paired with an experienced Nurse Advocate for training. Must be willing to travel to hospital sites for meetings during business hours, Monday through Friday only. Hours are flexible and dependent on need for Nurse Advocate representation.

Selection Process. Selection process for Associate Nurse Advocates shall be held no later than September of every election year. A reasonable advance notice of at least fifteen (15) calendar days for the due date to submit applications will be sent by electronic mail to members to their last known address. The Consent to Serve form will be used for the application, and must be received by CRONA by the application submission due date. At the next Executive Board meeting following the application due date, the Executive Board will consider all qualified applicants and make selections for each open position. Applicants may be requested to participate in an interview as part of the selection process.

Term of Office. The term of office for Associate Nurse Advocates shall begin on December 1 of the year in which the selection for appointment is made.

Inaugural and Subsequent Terms: the inaugural term of the Associate Nurse Advocate shall begin immediately upon appointment, and end November 30, 2022. Prior to the end of this inaugural term, the Executive Board will evaluate the effectiveness of the position and decide to either continue or to eliminate the position. Should the Executive Board decide to continue the Associate Nurse Advocate position, subsequent terms of office shall be for the same number of years, but not to exceed three years, as the term of the collective bargaining agreement.

Vacancies. The filling of a vacancy in any Associate Nurse Advocate position because of resignation, removal, death, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be conducted by the Executive Board in a process similar to filling the position at the regular end of the appointed term: announcement of vacancy and due date to apply by filing a Consent to Serve, and selection made by the Executive Board at the next Board meeting following the application due date. The term of appointment will begin immediately upon appointment. The length of term will be for the remainder of the vacated term.

Removal From Appointment. Any Associate Nurse Advocate may be removed from office for serious misconduct, failure to perform her/his duties, or for having at any time taken any action which may jeopardize or be detrimental to CRONA or which would interfere with the performance by CRONA of its legal and contractual obligations as a collective bargaining agent. An appointed official of CRONA who engages in any action which is detrimental to CRONA will be asked by the Executive Board to relinquish her/his appointed position.

No Associate Nurse Advocate shall be removed from office unless s/he has been served with specific charges in writing, given a reasonable time to prepare a defense, and afforded a full and fair hearing in accordance with the procedure specified in the CRONA Bylaws, Article IV, Sections 409 and 410.

Similarities between Associate Nurse Advocate and Executive Board Nurse Advocate:

- Paid employee of CRONA (on W-2, not 1099), at the Nurse's regular rate of pay with Relief differential (same as CRONA officers).
- Able to attend investigatory and disciplinary meetings to represent members as the representative of CRONA.
- Able to be second CRONA representative at grievance hearings, mediation, or arbitration.
- Allowed access to member phone and email database.
- Assigned an @crona.org email address.
- Responsible for keeping records of activities, including Nurses represented.
- Responsible for tracking and timely reporting of hours worked, mileage, and expenses, in accordance with established procedures.
- Responsible for reporting activities, including issues raised by Nurses and representation of individual Nurses involving investigations, to the Executive Board on an ongoing basis.
- Term of appointment is same as Executive Board.
- Must apply using Consent to Serve form.

Differences between (appointed Nurse Advocate) and Executive Board Nurse Advocate:

- Does not have voting rights when votes taken by Executive Board.
- May not be the only representative of CRONA at grievance hearings, mediation, or arbitration.
- Excluded from selection for Negotiation Team – priority is to reduce workload of Executive Board during negotiations.
- Works under supervision of Executive Board.
- Only obligated to attend Executive Board meetings to participate in discussion of current representation, as directed by the Executive Board.
- Selected by the Executive Board rather than a vote of the membership.
- May be an Area Representative.
- Not eligible for time off for CRONA officers, as specified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 22 (SHC) and Section 21 (LPCH); except as specified in Section 22.5 (SHC) and Section 21.5 (LPCH).

For ease of reference in reviewing this document, here is the description from the CRONA Bylaws, of the Nurse Advocate Executive Board member:

Section 606: Nurse Advocates

The Nurse Advocates shall be responsible for handling grievances and other labor-related matters or problems, and, in addition to duties stated below, shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Board or the Bylaws.

The Nurse Advocate's duties shall include:

- A. To assist in the administration of the CRONA's Collective Bargaining Agreement(s).
- B. To represent fairly all members of the bargaining unit.
- C. To ensure that contractual commitments are fulfilled.
- D. To comply with the methods of adjusting grievances under the Agreement(s).
- E. To coordinate all activities involving the handling and/or adjusting of grievances.
- F. To keep a current record file on all issues raised by members of the bargaining unit.
- G. To identify problem areas in the Agreement(s) and make recommendations to the Negotiation Committee(s).
- H. To educate Area Representatives and members regarding rights and responsibilities under the Agreement(s).
- I. To serve as advisors to any Negotiation Committee(s) and Team(s).
- J. To orient the newly-elected Nurse Advocate(s).