Mid-Columbia Medical Center Reducing Benefits for All Part-Time Nurses

As you know, the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) and Mid-Columbia Medical Center (MCMC) recently completed negotiations for a new contract. During those sessions, MCMC admitted that they had been inaccurately applying the benefit provisions of the contract for some part-time staff and they wanted to make corrections.

The contract historically allowed for four tiers of part-time employees:

- Part-time nurses working 20 hours per week- allowed full benefits
- Part-time nurses working 20 hours per week – may elect to accrue Paid Time Off (PTO) or extended Illness Hours (EIH) and receive a 5 percent differential \textit{in lieu} of all other benefits.
- Part-time nurses working 20 hours per week may elect to receive a 13 percent differential \textit{in lieu of} all other benefits.
- Part-time nurse working less than 20 hours per week, with no benefits offered, receive a 13 percent differential.

What MCMC told the negotiation team was that they wanted to eliminate the part-time tier which allowed for a 5 percent differential and accrual of PTO/EIH in lieu of all other benefits. They reported to us that some employees in this tier had also been allowed to purchase benefits due to “some confusion” and that to eliminate the confusion they would stop offering this tier. The ONA team objected and worked hard to keep this tier in place, eventually agreeing to “grandfather” nurses who were in this status, but not to offer it going forward.

We were told this change would impact about 24 nurses. However, these nurses would be given the option to maintain their differential or to obtain benefits. The choice they have always had.

MCMC also added the term “core” to the part-time group working 20 hours per week as a further clarification of which nurses were benefit eligible. \textit{It was understood by the ONA team that part-time core nurses would be entitled to core benefits.} ONA proposed clarifying further, that part-time core nurses were those...
working 40 hours in a pay period to hopefully include nurses who work more hours one week than another.

During the entire process, the ONA team understood that the benefits part-time nurses would be eligible for were the core benefits. At no time, did the hospital state that they were moving to eliminate benefits for that group. We were stunned and disappointed to find that the hospital does not intend to respect the dedication and service of its part-time core staff.

Some of you are asking why ONA would agree to such a plan? Some of you have clearly chosen to receive higher wages in lieu of benefits and ONA sought to respect that decision. Those elections were deliberate on your part, and have been in the MCMC contract for years. No changes were made to those provisions of the contract.

The ONA negotiating team is working to protect the benefits that part-time core nurses should be receiving and we are in consultation with our attorney and will be trying to reach agreement with the hospital to continue these benefits.

A letter has been mailed to hospital CEO Duane Francis outlining our disagreement with the changes to the part-time core benefit structure.

Be on the lookout for:

A meeting will be scheduled for part-time nurses who are affected by this change to meet and discuss what our next steps and options are. Try to attend. If you are a full-time nurse and can trade with one of your part-time peers so that they can attend – that is a great way to help also!

Any questions can be directed to your Labor Relations Representative, Ateusa Salemi, 541-571-8552 or salemi@oregonrn.org

ONA BARGAINING UNIT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Powering Up: Challenges & Opportunities

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for the 2015 Annual ONA Bargaining Unit Leadership Conference this fall. This year’s leadership conference, "Powering Up: Challenges and Opportunities" will be Friday, Sept. 18, 2015, at the Holiday Inn in Wilsonville. We are excited to present a day of educational sessions focused on strengthening our bargaining units and honing collective bargaining skills, positioning ONA and nurses to be ready for future challenges and to capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

Who Can Attend?

This conference is specifically for ONA professional union members who are either currently in leadership positions (BU executive team, PNCC members, Staffing Committee members) or those who are interested in taking a more active role in their bargaining unit. ONA Student Affiliate Members are also welcome to attend.

Continuing Education

This program is pending approval by Oregon Nurses Association, CEARP # 301.06.2015 for continuing nursing education contact hours. ONA is an accredited provider approved by Cal BRN, Provider #15089.