April 18, 2016

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
For a Better Contract and a Stronger Voice for PNMC Nurses

Nurses Support Annual Community Race

Thank you to all the nurses, friends and family members who turned out for the Newberg annual Camelia Run. It was a very successful event and a fun day for everyone.

Mediation Scheduled for April 19

Late last week the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service finally assigned the mediator, Julie Kettler, to our bargaining team. We are now scheduled for mediation on Tuesday April 19. You can do your part to ensure we get a strong first contract by demonstrating your solidarity with an ONA sticker of support.

Get your ONA sticker of support from any of our bargaining team members.

Hours Donated By ONA/PNMC RN Team: over 570
A Message From a Former ICU Colleague

Some of us remember Tom Lum – the 15-year nurse who worked on-call in our intensive care unit (ICU). He is an Oregonian born and raised. After graduating from college, becoming a nurse felt like the next natural step as he spent time volunteering in hospitals during high school then college and his mother was a nurse. So he graduated from Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in 1999 and has been working full-time there. He loves working in the ICU. He enjoys the critical thinking aspect of the work and collaborating with colleagues. The combination of RN autonomy and team work required to care for critical patients is a challenge he appreciates.

Several years ago he joined the on-call team here at our ICU. It was a good place to work with a great team of nurses. While the unit was not staffed with the ancillary support of OHSU, there was a health unit coordinator (HUC) on all night, even a certified nurses assistant (CNA) was sometimes available to help. He felt that it was appropriately resourced.

After a while things changed. There were cuts to the HUC position and nurses were being taxed with more and more logistical non-nursing tasks that got in the way of caring for patients. He observed that there were more frequent unsafe situations and he felt anxious about his assignments. Then came the unilateral change in on-call requirement. When he was hired, the manager at the time told him explicitly that he wouldn’t be held to any minimum shift requirements. He worked more than the minimum generally but one month he wasn’t able to work. He received a form letter from the manager saying that they had tried to contact him (no one had) but that if he didn’t call, they would consider it a voluntary resignation. No one ever tried to contact him. Because he didn’t need the position and it wasn’t union, he decided it wasn’t worth the anxiety and to just let the position go.

Then a few months later, he was contacted again by colleagues to say there was a new manager who was renewing efforts to recruit. So he came back. But he wasn’t there long when the cuts started getting bad again. Every shift was full with a combination of ICU patients and med/surg overflow patients. There were instances where supervisors not trained in critical care were the only relief for staff. He again felt anxiety when he went to work. “At the end of each of my shifts at PNMC, I was asking myself ‘Why did I come here?’ I knew that nurses were organizing and thought ‘they need this here.’ So I stuck around long enough to vote, then I got out. In June of last year I quit. I felt it was unsafe and being without a contract meant that if something went bad on the unit, the hospital wasn’t going to back me. I didn’t feel supported. I’d like to say to my former Newberg colleagues who I respect very much, keep fighting for your contract. I know that with my ONA contract at OHSU there’s protection for nurses being treated unfairly, nurses have a voice, and that management can’t just change the rules on a whim.”

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