



Oregon Nurses Association
Bargaining Unit Newsletter

Oct. 2, 2015

St. Charles Medical Center - Bend (STC-B) Bargaining Update No. 16



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John Nangle, RN

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Angie Streeter, RN

Alison Field, RN

Andrea Rombach, RN

Lynda Coats-Sellers, RN

Eric Morton, RN

Charlie Berman, RN

Courtney Niebel, B.A.

ONA Labor Relations Representative

Courtney Niebel, B.A.

503-560-4668

niebel@OregonRN.org

**Next Mediation
Session
Oct. 8, 2015**

Oregon Nurses Association

18765 SW Boones Ferry Road

Suite 200, Tualatin OR 97062

1-800-634-3552 within Oregon

www.OregonRN.org

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Key Issues in Our Mediation

We want to thank St. Charles administration for providing the nurses with their perspective on negotiations and their latest proposal. **We would echo St. Charles in saying that the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA)/St. Charles-Bend (STC-B) team (ONA Team) “is tasked with negotiating a competitive agreement for our nurses while ensuring the long-term viability and success of the health system as a whole.”** Our approach to negotiations and the proposals we have put forth will help achieve those goals for the organization.

Our ONA contract (Contract) has been in existence for over 35 years and has been a central component in building this organization into what it is today! We need to maintain a strong Contract to keep St. Charles competitive. Here a few things to remember as we continue mediation:

- The step advancement table in **Appendix A** was bargained into the Contract decades ago as a central component of nurse retention and attraction. **It is imperative that we have nurses commit to spending their careers at St. Charles.** We can't be excellent with only new grads, travelers and agency

nurses. The step progression increase is a longevity bonus designed to reward our commitment to St. Charles and recognize that we've gained another year of valuable experience. This is not part of cost-of-living raises.

- The **averaged gross wages** printed in the letter we received are misleading. St. Charles has been running at or above capacity while nurses are short-staffed and being requested to work extra hours. The average gross wages provided include all overtime and premium pay which is money we earn when we go above and beyond our requirements. There is likely \$1 million or more of overtime in those quoted averages. St. Charles can control the cost of the averaged gross wages by staffing appropriately according to Oregon law and not relying on nurses doing overtime.

Health Insurance Premiums at St. Charles are already some of the highest in the state. As demonstrated in two of our previous newsletters, a 5 percent cost shift for dependents has a huge impact on nurses net take home pay. Nurses can't afford this any more!

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What's even more disturbing is how this will impact our fellow caregivers. STC-B/ONA nurses are bargaining this benefit for all the thousands of St. Charles employees, many of whom make a considerably lower wage than we do. Though we don't represent them, we are concerned about the financial impact this would have on our ancillary staff as well.

Here are some facts on the earned time off (ETO) and short term disability (STD) issues: The extended illness bank (EIB) was eliminated five years ago with the promise nurses would have 100 percent reimbursement at the highest tier of the STD program. Now in addition to reducing the STD reimbursement and going back on their promise, St. Charles is trying to reduce the ETO benefit as well.

The problem with ETO, despite having two days of built in sick time, is that it was predicated on the EIB system that required the use of two sick days prior to entering EIB.

The STD system requires a 7-day elimination period prior to receiving the STD benefit. This could use as much as 72 hours of ETO.

The STD system, as it turns out, is requiring way too much ETO usage, and for this reason we need to offset that loss, which is why we are proposing an increase in our ETO accrual.

St. Charles is also using a tactic to split the bargaining unit (BU) with their ETO proposal by offering a lesser benefit to newly-hired nurses. ONA would never support this! Our power is being a collective bargaining unit, with nurses having the same benefits. We need to protect our current nurses and those who have not yet been hired. We want our future nurses to be valued and start their careers with good benefits.

In addition, St. Charles is going back on their promise regarding our STD benefit. Make no mistake—they will go back on their promise with ETO and try to reduce the benefit for everyone in three years.

The New Article 13 – Staffing. Oregon's Nurse Staffing Law was recently revised and signed into law in July 2015 by Governor Brown. Although nurse staffing has been part of Oregon law for over a decade, enforcement of the law by the State of Oregon has been challenging. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) admits that enforcement of this law, now and in the future, will be very challenging.

We must be able to use the grievance processes to ensure St. Charles adheres to Oregon law. We cannot wait or hope for OHA to come in and 'save' us when we have staffing issues. That is just the reality.

We must have New Article 13 – Staffing to empower nurses to safely advocate for nurse staffing.

That is why we have a special event coming next week:



St Charles Nurses' "Must Attend" Special Event: **Oregon Nurse Staffing Law Presentation**

By ONA's Assistant Executive Director of Professional Services
Carl Brown, PhD, RN, AOCN®, NEA-BC, FAAN

When: 1 – 2 p.m. Wednesday. Oct. 7, 2015

Where: St. Charles conference room C

Why: *Empowering staff nurses to advocate for their own nurse staffing!
Nurse staffing is one of the major factors in providing safe, quality patient care.*

Nurse Wins \$3M Lawsuit Against Portland Hospital

A jury recently awarded \$3 million to Linda Boly, RN, as a result of her wrongful termination lawsuit against Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center. Boly was fired by Legacy in 2013 after speaking up about cost-cutting measures and quotas she felt compromised patient care. She also alleged that the hospital broke Oregon's Nurse Staffing Law by implementing staffing plans that were not approved by the hospital's nurse staffing committee.

The award decision drew praise from the public and nurses across the state.

ONA testified about the staffing law as part of the case. Boly is currently an ONA member at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center.



"We're proud of Oregon nurses like Linda who are willing to stand up for what's right and advocate for appropriate staffing so we can provide the care our patients need," said ONA President Katy Cooper, BSN, RN, CCRN.

"This type of advocacy is at the heart of ONA's successful efforts to improve Oregon's Nurse Staffing Law. These improvements give nurses the tools and support they need to continue providing high-quality patient care."

Learn how changes to Oregon's staffing law affect your patients at www.OregonNurseStaffingLaw.org.

What Happens Now? and Other FAQ

As we anticipate our next mediation session scheduled for Oct. 8, we want every nurse at St. Charles Bend to be informed of the potential outcomes of all future mediation sessions.

While we would prefer the session result in a tentative agreement (TA) that our ONA Team can recommend, nurses should be prepared for these negotiations to push further into the fall.

During the BU meetings (attended by over 150 nurses), nurses urged our ONA Team to offer actions and activities for nurses to bring more public awareness to our issues. In response, we are setting up a public canvass for nurses to go and speak with the business community of Bend. We have established

"Talking Points" for nurses to use in this campaign as well as when speaking with neighbors, friends and family members about the importance of nursing to the community.

Here is the outline of the campaign:

- We are establishing talking points for nurses to share with the public on why nursing is so vital to our community.
- We are mapping out the Bend downtown and Old Mill District areas.
- We are creating lists of businesses in those areas for nurses to sign up to visit. Get a few nurse colleagues together, sign up for two to three

businesses and go share why nursing is so important.

- We are creating card stock signs to give to businesses, neighbors, friends and family that say **"We Support Nurses at St. Charles."**
- We have also established a JPEG with our slogan, **"Value Nurses to Value Patients"**, so please display this on your social media sites! You can find it on the [Work News](#) Facebook page and/or email our ONA labor relations representative, Courtney Niebel at Niebel@OregonRN.org to request it.

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In addition, we have a not-so-secret Facebook site called **Work News** with almost 400 nurses signed up. Please request to be added. We cross check all requests and try to keep the site up to date with current BU members only. But remember it is social media and we only tolerate appropriate dialogue! Go to **Work News!**

FAQ:

What's an informational picket?

Nurses walk, carry picket signs, and hand out leaflets on the public sidewalk in front of the hospital, in an effort to share our message of concern with the community.

Is it legal?

Yes. It's not just legal, it's our right as union members!

Who can picket?

Everyone. By everyone, we mean EVERYONE: you, your family, your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues and your pets! This includes Redmond, Prineville and Madras nurses who want to support us (not on work time, of course).

Who decides if we have an informational picket?

Nurses decide.

Why involve the community?

We serve and advocate on behalf of our community every day. The issues we are dealing with directly impact them. In light of administration's proposed takeaways, we need to enlist the community to assist us in achieving a fair contract that includes wages, hours and working conditions which allow St. Charles Bend to recruit and retain a highly skilled nursing staff. Maintaining and acquiring qualified nurses ultimately improves the care we provide to our community.

“Creating America's healthiest community, together.” —*St. Charles Health Systems Vision*

How can I help?

When/if the BU has determined that an informational picket is necessary, be sure to participate in any way that you can. If you are scheduled to work, go to work. Join the line before or after a shift, on breaks and lunches. If it's your day off, join the line. Most importantly, ask your friends and family to walk the line with us.

Can I get in trouble if my manager doesn't like it?

No. It is illegal for managers to question or discipline any nurse for talking about or participating in an informational picket. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) specifically protects participation in this type of union activity.

How is an informational picket different from a strike?

The specific purpose of an informational picket is to communicate the issues we have at the table with the public. Unlike a strike, an informational picket is not a work stoppage.

Does the ONA Team decide whether we go on strike?

No, the bargaining team may determine that they cannot achieve further movement at the table without concerted action from the entire BU but they would never determine that a strike will take place. Our ONA Team would call for a vote of all BU nurses.

An overwhelming majority of BU nurses would need to vote in favor of a strike to authorize such an action.