ONA Team Meet to Prepare for Bargaining

Our Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) contract with Amedisys, Inc., expires on March 31, 2018. As in previous years, we are preparing to sit down across from Amedisys administration to bargain a new agreement. Four of our nurse coworkers at Amedisys (see below) have stepped up to lead the effort and are currently drafting contract proposals with the help of ONA staff person Lydia Hallay, our chief negotiator. We based our proposals on the feedback we’ve gotten from nurses who participated in our recent pre-bargaining survey, market comparables from other ONA-represented facilities, and the years of experience we as nurses have working for Amedisys Oregon.

Priority issues for our team include achieving reasonable productivity standards, strengthening our ability to provide safe, quality patient care, and improving recruitment and retention through our contract.

The employer will have three representatives bargaining on their behalf, two of whom are flying in from the corporate office in Nashville. Because the majority of their team is traveling from out of state, the employer requested that we bargain consecutive days. Our team agreed, in hopes that we can expedite the process. We scheduled the first negotiation session for the evening of Thursday, March 22. Talks will continue on Friday evening.

Meet Our ONA Bargaining Team

Why did you volunteer to join the ONA negotiating team?

Dessirea Rufino, RN (with her daughter)

"My father was an Electrician and belonged to a union, his father was an Electrician and belonged to a union. I grew up in a household that understood the meaning of hard work. I knew through my family’s long history as union members, I would want to belong to one as well. Being a part of union gives me a sense of empowerment that comes from knowing I have a collective say on how my workplace is managed. It give me a sense of pride."
ONA Team Meet to Prepare For Bargaining continued from page 1

March 23, and all-day Saturday and Sunday March 24 & 25. Thus far, no further dates are scheduled, though we will schedule more if we need them.

Our ONA team includes: Jeannie Lucht, RN, Dessirea Rufino, RN, Lana Shurygin, RN, and Michelle Jordan, RN. All of them are volunteering their personal time to engage in this process on our behalf. They do not get paid to sit at the negotiating table, and have been meeting in the evening to prepare after working long days in the field.

Our union benefits all of us—whether we realize it or not. It’s because of our ONA contract that we have (among other things) regular cost of living adjustments, a right to due process and fair treatment, and a protected voice on the job. Your help and support in this process is important.

Your membership in ONA doesn’t just fund the day-to-day work of our union—it also helps us build strength and organizational capacity to fight on behalf of nurses across Oregon. Membership dues pay for the cost of negotiating and enforcing the contract that we all benefit from, while also helping ONA to improve industry standards around practice and compensation. If you are not yet a member of our union, please fill out the membership application (in this newsletter, page 5 and 6) and return it to one of the bargaining team members. If you are not sure whether you’re a member of our union, check your Amedisys pay stub or contact the ONA office.

Meet Our ONA Bargaining Team continued from page 1

ONA is a membership-based organization, founded by nurses in 1904 and continues to be run by nurse leaders—both at the state and local level. It’s nurses who decide the direction of our union; at the negotiating table, at the state capitol, and as the governing body of ONA.

Negotiating a new contract is hard work, and it can’t happen without the help of nurses just like you, who volunteer their time to advocate for workplace improvements on behalf of their coworkers.

This year, our bargaining team is comprised of four nurses. Here’s a little bit more about who they are, and why they decided to get involved in this process.

**Michelle Jordan, RN**

“I want to make sure there’s fair treatment and that RNs aren’t burnt out, so we can provide optimum care for our patients.”

**Lana Shurygin, RN**

“I would like to improve the quality of care for the patients. That could be done by improving the satisfaction and work life balance for nurses.”

**Jeannie Lucht, RN**

“To keep doing the job I love.”
Across the country, workers are being asked to do more with less. Home health is no exception; here at Amedisys Oregon, we’ve seen increased caseloads and have experienced pressure to work longer hours, drive further distances, and see more patients than ever before.

Unlike our nurse colleagues working for Amedisys in many other states, we have a real, tangible voice in decisions at work. Because of our union, we have a legal leg to stand on when it comes to advocating on behalf of our patients and our practice as nurses. In other states, Amedisys nurses do not have the same influence we have over productivity metrics. In other states, nurses do not have a published wage scale with yearly step increases and regular cost of living adjustments. In fact, here in Oregon, our non-RN colleagues do not have these things either- not because they don’t deserve them, but because they are not represented by a union.

Union workplaces are different. In a union setting, employers are legally required to sit down and negotiate with employees over wages, benefits, and working conditions. Our ONA contract is the result of those negotiations. It’s a living, breathing document that we have a right to return to and improve every 2-3 years. Our contract is just that- a contract between Amedisys and us as employees. It’s different than a promise or a policy in that it has legal standing and can be grieved if it isn’t followed.

This bargaining process is our opportunity to make improvements to our current working conditions, wages, and benefits. Our negotiating team will be working on behalf of all of us to bring forth reasonable proposals for change. Administration will be bringing their own proposals to the table. Our job is to meet in the middle and reach a tentative agreement that we think the majority of nurses will support.

Only members of ONA are allowed to vote on the finished tentative agreement. If you are interested in having a voice in this process, please fill the attached ONA membership card and turn it in ASAP!

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to your ONA team members.
Don’t Miss Important ONA Emails

ONA wants to make sure all members receive timely communications, ensuring you have the most up-to-date information on your contract, bargaining issues, upcoming votes, nursing research, practice issues and workplace policies. If you are not receiving ONA emails, we can help.

First, check to make sure ONA emails are not being filtered into a junk, spam or clutter folder. Many email providers, like Comcast, Yahoo and Gmail, have built in Spam/Junk filters or blockers. The filters are intended to prevent you from getting junk mail or spam, but it can also unintentionally block emails you want to receive. If ONA emails are in one of these folders, flag them as “not junk” and add News@OregonRN.org to your safe sender list.

If there are no ONA emails in those folders and you still aren’t receiving ONA emails, there are various causes listed to the right.

You can fix most problems by simply emailing ONA at News@OregonRN.org with your name, personal email address and the name of the facility you work at in the body of the email.

We will update our records to ensure you don’t miss future ONA emails.

Common Reasons for Not Receiving ONA Emails

1. **Mislabeled:** Emails from ONA are being flagged as junk or spam by your email service provider.
2. **No Email:** ONA does not have an email on file for you.
3. **Bad Email:** ONA has an incorrect or outdated email on file.
4. **Blocked:** Due to several failed delivery attempts, our system has stopped attempting to send emails to your email address.
5. **Opted Out:** You have opted out of receiving emails.
6. **Work Email Filters:** Some health care systems filter out ONA emails so nurses don’t receive ONA-related emails. This is why we encourage nurses to use their personal email addresses instead of work emails.

Fixing Problems to Receive ONA Emails

1. **Check your junk/spam/clutter folder for ONA emails:** Flag ONA emails as “not junk/spam” and add News@OregonRN.org to your safe sender list.
2. **Email ONA:** To fix reasons 2-6, simply email ONA at News@OregonRN.org, and include your name, personal email and facility you work at in the body of the email.

www.OregonRN.org/event/2018Convention

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) invites you to attend ONA’s Convention and House of Delegates in beautiful Bend, OR, April 18-20, 2018. Join nurses from across the state to learn from national and state leaders, decide ONA’s official positions, and determine your organization’s future.

ONA’s 2018 Convention is a three-day event featuring nationally recognized speakers, workshops, panels, discussions, and continuing education. This year’s event will be centered around how nurses can effectively advocate for patients and colleagues in the workplace and in the community.

Visit www.OregonRN.org/event/2018Convention to register for the Convention and select your sessions.