On Sunday, March 25, 2018, our Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) bargaining team reached tentative agreement (TA) with Amedisys on a new three-year contract. The new agreement, which came after four consecutive days of negotiations, includes sizable increases in compensation in addition to changes our team believes will improve workload and staffing issues over time.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TA:**

- **Weekend differential increase from $1.75/hour to $2.50/hour.**
- **Mileage reimbursement increase from $0.51 to $0.52 per mile.**
- **Additional shift incentive increase from $9.00/hour to $11.00/hour.** We also changed the language so the incentive now applies to all nurses, not just those who work part-time schedules.
- **Extended our filing deadlines for Step 1 of the grievance procedure from 21 to 30 days.**
- **On-call pay increase from $4.00/hour to $5.00/hour.**
- **Increase preceptor pay from $1.75/hour to $3.00/hour.** We also loosened the language around who is eligible to receive this pay.
- **Cost-of-living adjustments of 2 percent (2018), 2.5 percent (2019), and 3 percent (2020) during the life of the contract.**
- **Minor changes to productivity standards,** including slight tweaks to point valuation in order to more accurately reflect the time it takes to conduct certain types of visits. Our team was able to keep the total points required per week at the current contract levels (21-25).
- **A new, flat-rate incentive bonus for each “credited” visit made above 22 per week, which is separate and above nurses’ regular rate of pay.** The scale is as follows for “credited” visits above 22:
  - Visit 23 – $75
  - Visit 24 – $35
  - Visit 25 – $30
  - Visit 26 – $25
  - Visit 27 – $20
  - Visit 28 – $20
  - Visit 29 – $20
  - Visit 30 – $20
The visit bonus is cumulative (i.e., a nurse would get $75 for visit 23, then an additional $25...
for visit 24, etc.). It will be calculated on a weekly basis, and paid quarterly.

**PER DIEM NURSES**

The exclusion of per diem nurses (PRNs) from our contract is a concern nurses have raised during the last few bargaining cycles. This year was no different. Thus, our team made proposals to include PRNs in our contract. PRNs at almost every other ONA facility are included in the bargaining unit, so our desire to include them at Amedisys is not unusual.

Unfortunately, Amedisys declined our formal request to include PRNs. We feel the distinction Amedisys is making between the work performed by PRNs and the work performed by nurses is arbitrary, and so on Friday, March 23, we filed a petition for representation with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which will give our PRN colleague the opportunity to vote herself into our bargaining unit. The terms of her inclusion in the contract will need to be negotiated after the vote is complete.

Amedisys said several times during negotiations that they intend to hire more PRN positions. We agree that more PRNs are needed to help with workload and staffing. By including that position in our contract now, we can ensure that our future PRN colleagues are:

- Hired at a starting wage step that honors their years of experience.
- Have a legally protected voice in our workplace, including the ability to raise concerns about staffing and workload without fear of retaliation.
- Benefit from the same workplace protections the rest of us enjoy, like a tiered disciplinary process, rights to due process and fair treatment, annual step and cost-of-living increases, etc.
- Are able to negotiate over any future changes the employer wants to make to their wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Including the PRN classification in our contract could make it more feasible for regularly scheduled nurses to flex down to a per diem position (and back to an FTE position) if and when our personal lives require a change. It means we won’t have to “lose everything” in order to meet occasional family or personal needs. But most importantly, it ensures fair treatment and compensation for all nurses, not just those who work a regularly scheduled shift.

As of today, Amedisys has decided to fight the ability of our colleague to vote in an election. We will go to an NLRB hearing on Tuesday, April 3, to determine whether the work of PRNs and nurses is similar enough to warrant the inclusion of PRNs in our group.

If you would like to help our coworker by sharing testimony about how our work is similar or overlaps, please contact ONA staff member Lydia Hallay at Hallay@OregonRN.org or 503-807-0156.

**RATIFICATION VOTE**

As with any TA, we as nurses must vote to ratify this agreement in order for it to take effect. We will hold an online ratification vote beginning Monday, April 2, and running through Friday, April 6; the link to this vote will come via email, so look for it in your inbox on Monday. We’ll also send you a link to an electronic “red-lined” version of our TA showing all language changes for you to review in more detail.

As a reminder, only ONA members in good standing are eligible to vote on our contract. If you have questions about your membership status, please contact ONA member services at memberservices@OregonRN.org or 503-293-0011.

Thanks to our ONA bargaining team for putting in lots of hours on this new contract. If you have questions about the TA, please reach out to any of them:

Michelle Jordan  
Jeannie Lucht  
Dessirea Rufino  
Lana Shurygin

**Thank you, bargaining team!**