Benton County Update - May 21, 2021

A True Wage Scale!

Thanks to the many nurses who have been attending our bargaining sessions. Our unity has moved the employer. They agreed to remove the pay for performance system and return to a true wage scale!

We can finally undo the travesty of merit wage increases which have been shown to be unproductive in the public sector.

The employer countered with an 11-step wage scale with 3.41% between steps. Nurses would move up a step annually on one’s anniversary date. Initially, each current nurse would move to the step above their current wage.

No nurse will take a cut in wages. The employer’s proposed wage scale has more steps than the other two union contracts at Benton County (who have six steps each).

Their step proposals are part of a complete financial package that includes changes to Articles 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, and 26. The employer also proposed a two percent (2%) annual across the board wage increase and a four-year contract.

Unfortunately, eight nurses will be at top step after the first year. So, those eight will not experience additional step increases, but will continue to receive the annual wage increase. New hires would be placed at the appropriate step based on their experiences and will move to the next step after their six-month probationary period ends.

In this package, the employer rejected most of our other economic proposals. They did counter with an offer to pay the first $40 of short-term disability insurance premium. They countered our compensatory time proposal with a new personal leave time bank of 64 hours for 1.0 FTEs. And they propose a new designation of “leadwork” with a five percent differential.

We also signed tentative agreements (TA) in Articles 15 and 17 with minor language changes, mostly cleanup. (A “TA” is specific language changes in an Article to be included in the full contract for ratification, initially by both lead negotiators.)

We remain completely transparent with you. All bargaining documents are available on our webpage Benton County Health Department Bargaining Unit - Oregon Nurses Association (oregonrn.org). Under Bargaining Documents, you can find an updated bargaining tracker, their complete financial package proposal, our counter proposals on Articles 11 and 22, and all TAs. The employer also provided a roster with salaries, so we can see how it affects each nurse.
Attend Bargaining on Tuesday, June 8

Your attendance at bargaining is the most important action any nurse can take to show support for our proposals. We realize this may not be easy during in a busy workday. However, by participating—even for a few minutes—we show our unity, which moves the employer. Please attend during your meal or rest period, not while on the clock. You will be a silent observer, muted and not able to use chat.

If we caucus (i.e. each team meets separately), we will be in Gary’s Zoom room. See login details below.

For bargaining, we use the employer’s GoTo meeting account. Login details are different for each session. On Tuesday, June 8, we are bargaining from 1 – 5 p.m.

We suggest you call in on any phone, (408) 650-3123 using this access code: 473-672-693. Or click here https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/473672693 on any device.

Membership Meeting – Thursday, June 3

We will hold a membership meeting from 5-7 p.m. on June 3, where our team will make decisions on proposals in the open articles. All are encouraged to attend.

Join Gary’s Zoom meetings in one of these ways:
1) Any device’s browser
https://zoom.us/j/2810307587?pwd=czBLaMnBVOVMxKzJFWWh0b1ZSY1U3UT09
2) Download the Zoom app to any device
Meeting ID: 281 030 7587
Passcode: 6BjRSn
3) Dial on any phone 253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 281 030 7587
Passcode: 070754