As members of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA), we encourage other nurses at Cascade Health Solutions (CHS) to improve patient care by joining our professional association. As a statewide organization representing nearly 15,000 nurses, ONA is uniquely positioned to support the mission of the nursing profession. ONA is not an outside third-party, but a vital part of our Eugene community. In collaboration with CHS administrators and other coworkers, ONA is a vehicle to unite nurses as we advance patient safety.

Through ONA, we joined together to support the on-call positions in home health and hospice so day nurses rarely take much call. We worked with our employer to create attractive positions in the hospice house, as we provide that much needed service to our community.

Some nurses might say, “I cannot afford to pay dues!” First, membership dues are less than $44 per paycheck, and they include the range of benefits detailed on the back of this newsletter. Second, as your professional association, we provide services and support to enhance your career as a professional nurse.

Third, nurses at unionized facilities, like CHS, earn higher pay and receive better benefits than nurses employed at non-unionized ones. Moreover, nurses’ unions increase the wages of all nurses. Oregon ranks fourth in the nation in median wages for nurses because ONA has achieved high union density in our state. Non-unionized employers must offer comparable wages to recruit and attract nurses to work for them.

Fourth, employment at a union facility means job security. Our contract at CHS includes specific job protections. Unionized employees can only be fired for just cause. When you accept a job at a unionized facility, you are no longer an at-will employee. This means once nurses pass their probationary period, they cannot be fired except through specific steps that document their failure to perform. At-will employees can be terminated for any reason, except those specifically prohibited by law, like race, gender, pregnancy, etc. Before the employer can move to terminate unionized employees, they must document and demonstrate an employee’s poor performance, and provide them with an opportunity to improve their behavior.

These wages, benefits, and job protections were won by ONA nurse leaders who worked hard for more than a decade to have them here at Cascade Health Solutions. The employer did not provide them out of the kindness of their heart. To continue to ensure our contract exists, we need nurses to join us, get involved in our activities, and continue to fight for these protections.

We gain strength through unity! Facilities with weaker unions have poorer contracts than employers where nurses are engaged in their workplace through ONA. Together we work to defend and extend our victories.
Members of Congress are moving to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), a landmark piece of health policy that helped more than 550,000 Oregonians gain health insurance and paved the way for new health care models including Oregon’s coordinated care organizations (CCOs).

While many ACA replacement efforts still lack critical details, studies show repealing the ACA would create chaos for patients and could cause more than 24 million Americans to lose their health coverage, leave 240 million Americans with no health insurance options on the individual market and increase costs for 52 million people with chronic or pre-existing conditions.

We can’t go back to a time when half a million more Oregonians are left without health coverage or struggle to afford it and chronic diseases prevent people from buying insurance. Oregonians see the benefits of the ACA, which guarantees essential health services, removes stigmas from people with pre-existing conditions, eliminates gender-based discrimination in health insurance policies, and focuses on preventative health care.

These critical elements of the ACA save lives, reduce costs for patients and increase reimbursements for hospitals, allowing them to invest in patient care and hire nurses and staff.

If the ACA is repealed, many of these investments will be lost and the health care economy will backslide. Uncompensated patient care costs could increase by $1.1 trillion and hospitals could lose $289 billion.

As operating costs increase for hospitals, nurses and patients will pay the price. Facing an uncertain future, many hospitals have already announced hiring freezes or slowdowns and more than 2.6 million people—including 42,000 Oregonians—could lose their jobs if the ACA is repealed.

Oregonians’ health and financial well-being are at stake, along with the health of hospitals and governments that rely on health care support from the federal government.

Nurses and Oregonians must speak out against health care changes that reduce Oregonians’ access to health care and endanger patient care.

Take action today by signing a petition to U.S. Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) asking him to reject attempts to repeal the ACA and to take positive steps to protect and improve health care for all people. As chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Representative Walden plays an important role in evaluating potential changes to the ACA and other important health policy issues.

Learn more about how Oregonians have benefitted under the ACA at www.95percentOregon.com.

Sources for this article:
Pre-existing Conditions and Medical Underwriting in the Individual Insurance Market Prior to the ACA. Kaiser Family Foundation http://kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/pre-existing-conditions-and-medical-underwriting-in-the-individual-insurance-market-prior-to-the-aca/
Annual Election of ONA/CHS Bargaining Unit (BU) Officers

Open BU officer positions:

- Chair  
- Vice Chair  
- Secretary-Treasurer

The deadline to nominate yourself or someone else to be an officer is March 28, 2017.

Online election of officers is scheduled to open April 27, 2017.

We Need Your Leadership!

You must be an Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) member in good standing to vote and to serve.

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Nomination forms due by 4 p.m. on March 28, 2017

Three ways to submit your completed form:

1) Email or text a photo of your nomination form to Gary Aguiar, ONA labor relations representative, at aguiar@oregonRN.org or 503-444-0690

2) Fax the form to ONA headquarters at 503-293-0013

3) Mail the form to: ONA, Attn: Gary Aguiar 18765 SW Boones Ferry Rd. Suite 200 Tualatin, OR 97062

Consent to Run and Serve

If nominated, I consent to run, and if elected, I consent to serve:

Print Name

Signature

Date

Elections will be held online. Stay tuned for more details.
ONA Member Benefits

Many nurses think they are members of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) even though they haven't officially joined!

To activate your ONA membership, you must fill out an ONA membership application.

If you haven't filled out a membership application you're missing out on ONA's membership benefits, discounts and voting rights.

ONA Members Receive:

- ANA Membership and access to ANA Programs and Trainings
- Discounted ANCC Certifications
- Free and Discounted Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities
- Consumer Discounts Including:
  - Rip City Rewards (Portland Trail Blazers)
  - California Casualty Auto and Home Insurance
  - Health Club Memberships
  - Celebrate! ONA Holiday Entertainment Guide
  - Get Away Today Vacations
  - Car Rentals

Members Have a Voice.

ONA members are the only nurses who can vote on contracts and other issues that matter to nurses.

Members Give Us Power.

Each member gives us added strength at the bargaining table to advocate for improvements to patient care, nurse staffing and other important issues.

Members Are Our Leaders.

Members can develop their leadership skills through ONA’s Nurse Leadership Institute (NLI) and take advantage of leadership opportunities by serving on your bargaining unit leadership team, Professional Nursing Care Committee (PNCC), any of ONA's practice, ethics or health policy cabinets and the ONA board of directors.

To learn more, speak with your ONA labor representative today.

Gary Aguiar
503-444-0690
aguiar@OregonRN.org

Or visit us online at OregonRN.org to download a membership application!