Progress at Table

**Big Issues include PTO, Representation, and PMHH Breaks**

At our second bargaining session with Cascade Health (CH) on April 29, we continued to build on our goodwill, while advocating for nurses’ interests to improve working conditions.

CH presented their initial proposals and countered our proposals. Your Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) bargaining team made progress to refine and focus on our differences, which are primarily around paid time off (PTO), procedural rights to representation, and meals / breaks at the Pete Moore Hospice House (PMHH).

CH did not respond to our economic proposals as they are crunching numbers. We expect them to present their economic counters at our next bargaining session on May 8. ([CLICK HERE](#) to view our current bargaining tracker or go to [www.OregonRN.org/53](http://www.OregonRN.org/53) and follow the link.)

**Proposed PTO Changes**

CH proposed three changes to our earned leave provisions that may concern some nurses. In our last round, we

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Bargaining by The Numbers

On April 17, we offered 19 changes to 11 of the articles in our contract.

Of these, the employer tentatively agreed (TA) to three on April 29. A “TA” means both parties have agreed to specific contractual language, which is subject to ratification by our members.

Further, Cascade Health offered counter-proposals to six of our proposals and only rejected four outright.

On April 29, the employer proposed 46 language changes to 14 separate articles.

Of these, we TA-ed 18 on mostly clean-up and minor clarification issues. This leaves 34 total proposals yet to be addressed.

Six of the remaining proposals are our economic ones: annual increases in base wages, PTO accrual to match our comparators, BSN/MSN differential, increased educational expenses, additional paid bereavement leave, and increased cell phone stipends.

CH will offer a full-blown economic analysis at our next bargaining session on May 8.

They indicated that
successfully bargained a minimum of two nurses granted PTO in each department (home health and hospice).

This time, they proposed to reduce this number to only one nurse when core staffing is seven or less. For example, on Mondays and Fridays, when we have more admits, we need more nurses available. If the core staffing, or number of nurses available to work on a particular day, drops below eight, the employer proposes to cap granting PTO to one nurse.

(The employer substantive proposals are available [HERE](http://www.OregonRN.org/53) or go to www.OregonRN.org and follow the link).

CH suggested that with the increased number of part-time positions (i.e., 32-hour nurses), core staffing for a particular day has declined. This results in more work for those who are scheduled those days.

Further, the employer wants to limit the length of an individual nurse’s vacation during prime periods. Under the employer’s proposal, PTO would be capped at three weeks during summer months (June to August) and December. It would allow the manager to accommodate more nurses’ requests during these periods.

Finally, they propose to allow a manager more time to respond to PTO requests. Our current provision requires the manager to respond within ten days from the date of the request. Instead, the employer proposes that the trigger for the days begins when the manager receives the request.

So, a manager on vacation would not receive the request until they return to work. The ten-day clock would begin on their first day back at work, not when the nurse submitted the PTO request.

What do you think about these proposed changes? Do these changes seriously impinge on your work-life balance or can we accommodate the employer’s suggestions to improve work flow?

CH also proposed to trim two health benefits:

1. delete our enhanced vision coverage for progressive and slim lens and

2. deletion of the fifty percent coverage of major dental.

**Rights to Representation**

We proposed three improvements to our right to representation by our union, which the employer has rejected. When a nurse is called into a factfinding meeting that may lead to discipline, we want the manager to notify nurses of their rights to a union steward. Many nurses are not aware of this right and do not assert it at the time of the meeting. A union steward ensures that an accurate record of the investigation is recorded and that the nurse’s voice is clearly heard.

Second, we proposed the employer remove discipline from our personnel files after 18 months. Our current language allows the nurse to request it after 24 months. We think it should be an automatic action.

Finally, CH has not allowed our labor representative to visit the PMHH after normal business hours, which prevents nurses’ ability to hear from their ONA labor rep. When a labor rep rounds the units, they announce themselves at the nurse’s station and visit the breakroom for a few minutes. If nurses are able, they can take a break to discuss union matters in private. Our labor rep notifies the employer and the nurses in advance of such visits. Night nurses deserve this access as well.

**How important are these issues to you?**

**PMHH Meals and Breaks**

We spent substantial time discussing the concerns we heard from PMHH nurses about missed meals and breaks. Our current language requires the employer to pay a nurse for a missed meal. The nurse has an obligation to discuss their inability to get a break with their manager every time it happens.

We also discussed CH’s recent waiver request to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). CH applied for a waiver for RN meals and breaks at its PMHH. Minimal staffing is usually one RN, one LPN, and one CNA. Their request is that the LPN may relieve the RN for meals and breaks 3 p.m. to 7 a.m., working within their scope of practice. The two nursing staff members required by law, if the waiver is granted, would be the LPN and the CNA.

Since RNs are not allowed to leave the property, if an urgent matter arises, the RN will come back on

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duty and get their meal or break later in the shift. Our member of the Staffing Committee submitted a letter in support of the waiver.

ONA’s Nurse Practice Consultants in our Professional Services department reviewed the waiver request and agree it is a reasonable solution. If rejected by OHA, we volunteered to problem-solve with CH on other ways to resolve the issue.

We researched other hospice houses in Oregon. We found it is a common practice for smaller ones, like PMHH, to require RNs to remain on the property for their entire 12-hour shift.

We are seeking nominations for these officers for our local bargaining unit:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Membership/Education Chair
- Grievance Chair

If you are interested, please contact Gary Aguiar, our labor rep. Text/call him at 503-444-0690 or email at Aguiar@OregonRN.org

Full descriptions can be found on your ONA/CH webpage www.oregonrn.org/53 and following the Bylaws link or CLICK HERE.

Officer Nominations Are Now Open

altogether our economic proposals are more than $100,000 over their annual budget. They suggested that the defined benefit retirement plan we inherited from the McKenzie-Willamette hospital will require substantial contributions over most of the next decade.

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Staffing Education & Advocacy Training

Have you recently been elected to your hospital’s staffing committee or do you desire to be a more prepared and effective staffing advocate? If so, we encourage you to take a SEAT with ONA for our online Staffing Education & Advocacy Training (SEAT). This is the only comprehensive staffing law training in Oregon and is available online through our OCEAN platform. It is available 24/7 and can be taken at your own pace. It is free for ONA members and available to non-members at a discounted price.

Nurses can earn 2.25 continuing nursing education contact hours for completion of the entire SEAT series.

Part 1: Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law
Part 2: How to Write a Better Nurse Staffing Committee Charter
Part 3: How to Write a Better Staffing Plan
Part 4: Staffing Committee Orientation

Visit www.OregonRN.org/OnlineCE to get started.

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 can 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.