We received no response from our CEO Erik Thorsen and our Board of Trustees after 115 Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) nurses signed and delivered a petition to them. Nearly all nurses at CMH signed pledge cards to vote in favor of holding an informational picket. ONA/CMH nurse leaders agree that this is the next step.

From July 23 to July 30 online voting will be open for all nurses to vote on officially empowering their bargaining team to hold an informational picket, if a fair agreement still cannot be reached.

After the vote, we will return to the bargaining table with a federal mediator on Aug. 1 in hopes of reaching an agreement before a picket would be held. The law requires that we give ten days notice before picketing.

The ONA/CMH bargaining team met with management’s bargaining team on Wednesday, July 17 for a negotiation session. At our previous session both sides stated that we needed mediation to work through our largest issues involving economic stability with Doc Caps and FTE, wages, education, health care, decision making and staffing. At our session this week we agreed to only discuss smaller issues until we can meet with a mediator.
We are encouraged to report that management is feeling the pressure! Their bargaining team appears to be trying harder to work through the issues. We reached one tentative agreement on Article 8 regarding requests off.

We came close to reaching agreement on several other articles. For full copies of the proposals we’ve exchanged and our tentative agreements, please see our website.

Despite progress on our smaller issues, the day ended with management reiterating that they cannot provide economic stability, and have nothing further to offer on staffing, wages, education, equal pay for clinic nurses or any of our other top priorities. Our nurses across all departments signed a petition stating that we need progress made on these issues in order to reach a fair agreement. With no response from our CEO or the Board of Trustees and no progress at the bargaining table on our top issues, we must move forward with an official vote for an informational picket. We hope that every single nurse will take time to read about what is at stake and learn more about what an informational picket means. Please see the informational picket FAQ on page 3 of this newsletter.

Contract action team members, our bargaining team, and our lead negotiator, Amber Cooper, are very willing to talk with anyone who has questions to make sure all nurses feel fully informed before voting. An announcement will be made soon regarding in-person question and answer sessions.

Articles Exchanged on July 17

As nurses we are very detail oriented, and want to clarify that counter proposals were given from each side on the following articles and we always put copies of these on our website for full transparency of what was actually exchanged:

**ONA presented counters on Articles 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 18, 29, 31, 42**

**Management presented counters on Articles 4, 6, 8, 9, 18, 29, 37**

Tentative Agreement was reached on Article 8, and we are very near an agreement on Article 9. Both sides agreed to leave Article 14 as it is currently written.

Announcement

This announcement serves as a five day notice for an official vote to empower your bargaining team to hold an informational picket if an agreement cannot be reached.

Online voting will begin Tuesday, July 23 at 4 p.m. and will conclude Tuesday, July 30 at 4 p.m. Emails will be sent with voting instructions.

In person voting will be held in the CMH cafeteria July 25, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. and July 29, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

This online vote is different from any pledge card you may have signed that indicated you were willing to vote. This is the actual vote.
**Informational Picket FAQ**

**Why do we need to vote to hold a picket?**
Informational pickets are a powerful demonstration of nurse solidarity – but only if they are supported by a majority of nurses. Holding a successful vote sends a message to hospital administration that nurses are willing to take concrete action in support of the issues we stand for.

**Is informational picketing really necessary?**
While we’re hopeful we can reach agreement sooner, we’re still far apart on key issues. Engaging in a discussion about pickets now helps both nurses and the ONA team take the steps necessary to work towards tentative agreement or, if necessary, build towards further action. By picketing, we draw community attention to our concerns and put public pressure on the employer to give our concerns the attention they deserve.

**Is this anything like a strike?** No. Informational picketing is not a strike. It is a demonstration of solidarity on non-work hours to share information about our struggles with our community. There is no work stoppage. If you are scheduled to work, you go to work. You can join the picket line on your break and lunch.

**Is picketing legal?** Informational picketing is a legal tactic in support of our negotiations as long as we give the employer ten days notice and keep our picket lines on public sidewalks around the hospital.

**What would I have to do?** Join the picket line, hold a sign and walk with your colleagues, friends and family in support of a fair contract. Whether it’s your day off or whether you’re joining during a break or before/after your work day—we’ll need you there. And bring a friend with you.

**Can I get in trouble for participating?** No. It’s a protected right under federal law. CMH cannot discipline you for talking about or participating in an informational picket. This is a protected, concerted activity under the National Labor Relations Act. It’s also illegal for managers to talk to employees about the action or question you about plans to participate.

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**Upcoming Bargaining Sessions**

**July 31:** We will be spending this day in sidebar conversations with management. This means that only two nurses and our negotiator will have side conversations with management. We are not empowered to make decisions in these conversations, only to informally discuss ideas that still require approval of our entire bargaining team. The purpose is to create a space for management to think more creatively about solutions that they might not feel as comfortable discussing in front of all our members.

**August 1, 14 & 23:** We have confirmed that we will have a federal mediator present to help facilitate our August negotiations. A mediator has no power to make decisions in our negotiations, but can be helpful in the communication process.
Community Petition Gaining Huge Support

After such overwhelming support among nurses for our internal petition, we heard many other people in our community have been asking what they can do to support us. So, we launched a community petition that now has over 500 signatures and counting. We’re gathering online signatures from our colleagues, fellow staff, providers, family, friends, neighbors and the larger community in Astoria as well as around the state and country. Please help spread the word and ask folks to sign the petition here!

Comments From the Community

These are just a small set from among hundreds of comments from our community who support us and ask management to do the right thing:

“Overworked and underpaid people is not the way our health system should work. I support our nurses."  
-Rokey Scott, Neville, WA

“The L&D nurses at CMH went out of their way to make sure we were comfortable and well taken care of. They treated us amazing and they deserve the same!”  
-Keiana Cobb, Ocean Park, WA

“Doctors support nurses!”  
-Dr. Richard Moberly, Portland, OR

“Nurses are on the front lines of care at Columbia Memorial Hospital. They need our support and appreciation. Let’s give them a fair contract.”  
-Steve Siler, Astoria, OR

“Please treat your nurses and staff well. They took such great care of me when I was recently hospitalized. They deserve a living wage and respect. Do the right thing.”  
-April Michael, Astoria, OR

“I am a RN and have come to Astoria to fill in for shifts when short staffed. They are hard-working, wonderful people. They asked me to stay on as permanent staff, but were not able to match my current wages, or pay even close to what is necessary to live in Astoria. Increased wages are needed to recruit nurses to move there and stay. Please be fair to the staff, so the community can be taken care of.”  
-Holly Townsend, Happy Valley, OR

“I am planning to deliver my baby at your maternity ward this October. I hope you'll have this sorted out by then, so I may have happy, well-treated nurses on staff to care for me!”  
-Brookley Henri, Astoria, OR

Visit ONA’s Facebook page from 2-2:30 p.m. on Aug. 14, 2019 to hear from our nurse practice consultants. They’ll be taking questions about everything from nurse staffing and scope of practice to continuing education. If you can’t see it live, it is archived for viewing later.

WWW.facebook.com/OregonNursesAssociation