Vaccine Mandate Bargaining

Your ONA nurse leaders and labor representative met with Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) administration on September 14, 2021 to provide our first proposal on the state vaccination mandate for health care workers. This proposal was developed by our labor representative and ONA nurse leaders (Kelsey Betts, Sarah Rogers and Shelby Mendoza). Here is what we proposed:


We also asked questions regarding their new religious and medical exception forms, which are more robust than the forms the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) provided. They said that these forms were modeled largely off of what OHSU has implemented. They said the forms do not need to be filled out in their entirety, but that could cause them to not have enough information to honor an exemption.

We are hearing that employees who request exemptions are being interviewed by administration. The religious committee interviewing employees consists of Nicole Williams, Kelli Brenden and Jarrod Karnofski. The medical committee interviewing employees consists of Nicole Williams, Kelli Brenden, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Strear and Betsy Brenden from employee health.

As of September 14, only one ONA represented nurse has requested an exemption. There are currently 17 nurses who have either declined or not submitted proof of vaccination. We asked if any of these nurses were on leave and if so, how they planned to handle those situations. They didn't have a definitive answer on this.

One of the questions that we have asked and not received a clear answer on is what CMH will be offering for vaccine side effects, such as additional sick leave. They responded by saying they would follow the temporary Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS). We are unsure of what that means, but they said they would get back to us on that.

For employees who do not get vaccinated by October 18, their employment will cease on that day, as well as health benefits. October 4, is the deadline to be fully vaccinated but nurses who do not full this requirement will be kept on the schedule until October 18.

We offered to caucus (take a break) and see if they could provide a proposal for us today. They declined and said they would be running it by their labor attorney, Jackie Damm. They said they would get back to us in approximately one week.

On September 21, we received two emails from HR. They let us know that they would not be providing any additional earned leave for vaccine side effect recovery. They said they recently provided 16 hours of earned leave.

continued on page 2
Vaccine Bargaining Update (Continued)

This was the second email:

“Thank you for meeting with Judy, Nicole and I on September 14 to present the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) and the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) surrounding the CMH implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate. After a thorough review of the MOA, we have chosen not to sign it or propose an alternate one. The majority of asks in the MOA have already been addressed by CMH through implementation of OHA and CDC recommendations or are required by regulatory bodies such as OSHA”.

We promptly reviewed this with our attorney. Since the vaccine mandate is a mandatory subject of bargaining, this refusal to continue negotiating with us is an unfair labor practice under the National Labor Relations Act, NLRA.

Stay tuned for next steps.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to reach out to one of us.

ANA Launches Resilience & Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource Site

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is committed to meeting the needs of nurses and has launched a NEW Nurse Suicide Prevention and Resilience Resource site to provide information and tools to address the critical issue of suicide prevention.

Research indicates that nurses are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general public. During this unprecedented time, nurses are struggling with mental health issues like fear, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress as they respond to COVID-19 and continue to care for all patients.

Effectively managing these mental health issues is essential in nurse suicide prevention.

ANA’s Resilience and Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource site provides information and tools to:

- Build resilience
- Assist in active crises
- Support suicide survivors
- Offer grief and bereavement coping strategies
- Honor a nurse’s memory

We encourage all nurses to check out the site, bookmark the pages, and share the resources with a colleague or a friend in need.

Nurses, you are not alone. Help is available. Learn more here.

Space is limited so register today at:

www.OregonRN.org/Steward-Training