Oregon AFL-CIO to Join March for Nurses in Astoria

Tomorrow, Sept. 21 at 4:30 p.m., nurses and union leaders from across Oregon are gathering at the Labor Temple Diner & Bar (934 Duane St, Astoria) to march through downtown Astoria and raise public awareness to the issues at our hospital.

This past week, we had Tuesday, Sept. 17 marked for mediation and hospital management refused to show up with real movement to reach a fair agreement. Nurses across the hospital have expressed frustration and anger that management is refusing to do the right thing and show up to negotiate. We have continued to experience management’s attempts to violate the Oregon nurse staffing law, along with continued mistakes over schedules and dock, which are our remaining two unresolved issues at the bargaining table.

It’s time management came to the table to make these things right rather than continue to violate our contract, state and federal laws. This past week hospital management also attempted to retaliate against nurses for engaging in protected union activities. We are currently seeking unfair labor practice charges (ULPs) against the hospital, and demand that retaliation cease immediately. We will not tolerate this type of illegal behavior from management.

As we move forward, now more than ever, nurses are talking with one another about what is at stake and what actions we can take to secure a fair contract. We ask that every nurse take time to have these important conversations. Most of all, we ask that management do their jobs and get back to the bargaining table.

Safe Staffing at Risk

We are negotiating for contract language that supports and protects nurses and patients via safe and adequate staffing. These changes will also support the CMH staffing committee’s ongoing work with the legal requirements of the Oregon nurse staffing law.

We are pushing for language in our contract that provides nurses the ability to grieve violations of our hospital and unit-based staffing plans. Contract language that protects safe staffing is included in 19 other ONA contracts, which helps to hold employers accountable when they ignore Oregon’s nurse staffing law.

Over the years, CMH administrators have been dismissive toward ONA staff nurses who advocate for nurse staffing and patient care. Managers routinely ignore nurses’ concerns at the individual level, in Unit Based Nurse Practice Council (UBNPC) meetings, and in nurse staffing complaint forms. CMH executives have known since 2015, when the Oregon legislature updated the Oregon nurse staffing law, that new nurse staffing plans needed to be developed and passed by the staffing committee. The 2015 law went into full effect in 2017, and CMH has still not complied with the law.

In 2017, CMH nurses filed a complaint to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) because CMH was violating Oregon law. The OHA conducted an independent investigation of staffing at CMH and found a significant number of violations of Oregon’s hospital nurse staffing law and ordered CMH to comply.

One year-and-a-half later, hospital executives still haven’t fixed these problems. Nurse staffing in the state of Oregon is about people and patient care – not corporate profits. Patient care and nurse staffing

Continued on page 2
advocacy is a staff nurse’s duty as put forth in the ANA code of ethics provisions, the Oregon Board of Nursing chapter 851 division 45, and the Oregon nurse staffing law. It is imperative that we, as staff nurses, continue to advocate for patient care and force CMH to comply with the law.

The table below highlights the deficiencies that continue to exist in every nurse staffing plan at CMH, broken up by unit. This information comes from CMH staffing committee documents. This list of staffing plan deficiencies in every nursing unit is a real concern. We need the ability to grieve staffing issues. ONA has proposed this be added to the contract language. This will support nurses in advocating for safe patient care and it will help address deficiencies in the CMH staffing plans.

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<tr>
<th>CMH Staffing Plans Evaluation by Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing Plan Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Mix Considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Recognized Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Staffing-Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Relief Plan/Divert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals and Rest Breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing Data Points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Our struggle for a fair contract is mirrored by struggles at hospitals all over the country. The ACA and Medicaid expansion brought in huge revenue for all these hospitals, but now the question is if executives will use that revenue responsibly. **Be sure to read about tens of thousands of nurses all over the country who are taking action to hold their hospital executives accountable.** Patient safety seems to be the biggest theme across all these hospitals, where nurses just like us are standing up for their patients.

Visit: [www.SupportCMHNurses.com](http://www.SupportCMHNurses.com) to find links to articles about this news coverage.
Your Union, Your Rights

As a member of ONA, you are a member of a labor union and have specific rights guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

**RIGHTS AS A MEMBER:**

- Bargain collectively through representatives of employees’ own choosing for a contract with your employer setting your wages, benefits, hours and other working conditions.
- Discuss your terms and conditions of employment or union organizing with your co-workers or your ONA Labor Relations Representative.
- **TAKE ACTION** with one or more co-workers to improve your working conditions by, among other means, raising work-related complaints directly with your employer or with a government agency and seeking help.

**WHAT MANAGEMENT CANNOT DO:**

- Prohibit you from soliciting for a union during non-work time, such as before or after work or during break times; or from distributing union literature during non-work time, in non-work areas, such as parking lots or break rooms.
- Question you about your union support or activities in a manner that discourages you from engaging in that activity.
- Fire, demote, transfer you, reduce your hours or change your shift, or otherwise take adverse action against you. Cannot threaten to take any of these actions, because you join or support a union, because you engage in concerted activity for mutual aid and protection, or because you choose not to engage in any such activity.
- Prohibit you from wearing union hats, buttons, t-shirts and pins in the workplace except under special circumstances.
- Spy on or videotape peaceful union activities or pretend to do so.
- Engage in direct dealing with employees, or **change working conditions** without union input.

What does it mean to be “direct dealing”? In general, an employer is obligated to bargain over its employees’ wages and other terms and conditions of employment when a union represents those employees. The union is the legally recognized representative of the employees. Doing otherwise, cutting individual deals with nurses without agreement by the union, is prohibited by law. Direct dealing is when an employer and employee discuss and take action without the union’s knowledge or presence in matters that fall within the scope of mandatory subjects of bargaining.

Changes to working conditions happen when a new policy comes up that changes the way that your day to day work happens or creates a new circumstance for possible discipline. For instance, requiring nurses in certain departments to wear color coded scrubs, changing a requirement about education or licensing, or changing a scheduling system or vacation approval policy.

**QUESTIONS?** Talk to your ONA executive team, department steward, or your ONA labor representative.
MARCH FOR NURSES

Saturday
Sept. 21, 2019
4:30-6 p.m.

Downtown Astoria
(Starting at the Labor Temple, 934 Duane St.)

The Oregon Nurses Association and the Oregon AFL-CIO invite you to join nurses from Columbia Memorial Hospital to march for a fair contract. Hospital administration is refusing to meet with nurses despite nurses serving the North Coast community without a contract since May 31. All the nurses are asking for are consistent schedules and a guaranteed voice in the number of patients assigned to a nurse.

Please join the march to show you care about nurses. Everyone is Welcome!

Questions? Contact Amber Cooper at Cooper@OregonRN.org.

SupportCMHNurses.com