Columbia Memorial nurses to hold town hall Sept. 8

Nurses say it’s time for the community to hear from them

ASTORIA, Ore. – September 4, 2019 – On Friday, August 23, Columbia Memorial Hospital’s (CMH) management bargaining team walked out of contract negotiations with the hospital’s nurses. In response, nurses will hold a community town hall on Sunday, Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. at Fort George Public House Showroom in Astoria. Nurses will provide updates on contract negotiations and will be joined by guest speakers including Oregon Commissioner of Labor and Industries Val Hoyle, Oregon State Representatives Rachel Prusak and Tiffiny Mitchell, Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, Oregon Nurses Association Labor Cabinet Chair Kevyn Paul and more. Everyone is welcome to attend.

“The North Coast community does not deserve this kind of treatment by the hospital administration,” said Nicholas Bowling, vice chairperson of the negotiations team and a nurse at CMH. “Their unwillingness to bargain is compromising the care of our patients. We will not back down on our demand for contract protections that guarantee our nurses voice in setting safe staffing levels.”

“Over the last six months nurses have repeatedly seen their hours cut, more than other hospitals of our size,” explained Shaun Haner, a CMH emergency department nurse and member of the negotiations team. “The number of hours per period can vary greatly making it hard to budget for the month, six months or the year. No one can live like this long term and it makes it impossible to recruit or retain high quality nurses.”

The town hall is an opportunity for the community to hear directly from nurses, ask questions and learn how contract negotiations will affect health care for the entire North Coast.

CMH is one of the most profitable hospitals in Oregon, running an operating margin of nearly 12 percent. Having a healthy reserve is necessary but few efforts have been made to decrease patient costs, improve protections around staffing levels, or provide wage parity and economic security to all nurses.

Nurses at CMH have been working without a contract since May 31. Management has not agreed to the nurses’ request for further mediation. Nurses are also asking community members to sign their community petition here.

About the Oregon Nurses Association

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is the state’s largest and most influential nursing organization. It is a professional association and labor union which represents nearly 15,000
nurses across the state. ONA’s mission is to advocate for nursing, quality health care and healthy communities. For more information visit [www.OregonRN.org](http://www.OregonRN.org).

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