ONA Post-COVID Legislating Planning Session Notes
June 16, 2020

Announcements
• Future calls will be more focused on ONA’s legislative planning for the upcoming session.
• Governor Brown has scheduled a special session on June 24 related to Oregonians’ demands to defund/reform policing related to police violence and COVID.
• No call on June 30

Attendees discussed the following
• Worker protections:
  o Waiver liability: Would protect front-line providers in unsafe working situations (inadequate PPE, lack of orientation to new units, etc.) if the worker exposes a patient/visitor/staff to COVID. These exposures are not due to negligence, but rather because the hospital is not a safe working environment.
  o All medical staff should have access to adequate PPE. Discussion on potential system oversights to ensure facilities are providing and storing enough PPE and following the law. Discussion on the need for research on best practices for PPE (ex: how often nurses should change it out, disinfectant practices, long-term health effects on staff wearing face masks through entire shifts, etc.).
  o Discussion on need for hospitals to have financial reserves for these large-scale emergencies, which are not currently required in Oregon.
• Public Health:
  o Health equity: Data on COVID was initially not being tracked by race. Once race was tracked, there were huge disparities in treatment accessibility and death rates between communities of color and white communities.
  o Community partners: Discussion on pre-screening patients before they go to the hospital and how hospitals are reimbursed per visit (limiting necessary visits related to family health).
  o Discussion on legislating non-profits to have community health components since they often have excess funds due to their non-profit status. Efforts to tax hospitals are not likely to pass in Oregon.
• Professional Practice:
  o Discussion on nurses’ frustration with the CDC, WHO, and OHA related to their changing positions/recommendations on COVID and PPE.
• Conclusions and Next Steps:
  o ONA will be developing a questionnaire for members to provide feedback on the above topics. Request to determine age range on this survey to see if all nurses are being targeted via email/online surveys.