



ONA Position on Resuming Elective Surgeries in Oregon

ONA is deeply committed to the continued protection of Oregon nurses and communities in this critical period as we assess reopening both the economy and elective services in our hospitals. Resuming elective surgeries in Oregon hospitals will allow many nurses to stop living without a paycheck, and it is important it happen as soon as it can be done without endangering the lives of more nurses, patients, and community members.

We are disappointed that some health care systems and hospitals have chosen to not pay Oregon nurses for shifts cancelled in elective surgery units. This failure of leadership by Oregon hospitals has created an additional layer of fear and anxiety for many nurses who are already doing their best to care for themselves and their families in an international pandemic.

ONA supports reopening with use of PPE consistent with manufacturer guidelines (not emergency extended use and reuse), combined with aggressive testing for surgical patients and nurses, and robust and timely PPE tracking. ONA is deeply concerned that many hospitals and health care employers still are unwilling to disclose how much PPE they have to their employees and are breaking practice standards with directives to our members to reuse single use PPE, such as N95 masks, which renders them potentially ineffective.

Currently, Governor Brown's plan allows hospitals to direct nurses to extend the use or reuse PPE that has not been proven to be safe for nurses or patients. Continued emergency reuse of PPE while at the same time opening up hospitals for elective surgeries would directly risk the lives of frontline healthcare workers, all patients, and our communities. We are particularly concerned about continuing to contain the pandemic and the risks that an influx of tourists into our rural, coastal, and frontier communities during warmer weather could present without proper PPE usage.

We urge Governor Brown to realign PPE requirements in the plan, and hope to soon be able to back a pathway to reopening Oregon that will keep nurses, patients, and all communities safe.