Bargaining Continues

We continued contract negotiations with the hospital on Nov. 13. Our ONA/Coquille Valley Hospital (CVH) bargaining team has been altered. ONA/CVH nurses Lora Schepp, Courtney Whittaker and Lacey Taylor remain at the table; however, our ONA labor rep has changed from Courtney Niebel to Susan Bruce and we now have attorney Margaret Olney to assist with our negotiations.

As a result of those changes, our session on November 13 was primarily a review of where we are with the current bargaining process. We verified the articles where we ’d reached agreement and reviewed those areas that remain open for negotiations.

Our bargaining team also clarified with the hospital that we have no intention of removing the charge nurses from bargaining unit representation. That topic is a permissive subject of bargaining and we do not agree to negotiate such a change.

Items that remain open are related to scheduling, overtime, committee participation, tuition reimbursement and all financial issues.

We were scheduled for another negotiation session on Nov. 24, but the hospital chose to cancel due to hospital leaders traveling out of state for the holiday. Our next session is scheduled for Dec. 4 via Zoom.

Surgery Department Scheduling Proposal

The hospital has proposed changes to contract language that would allow them to stop paying overtime for nurses in the surgery department who work beyond their scheduled eight-hour shifts, until the nurse meets a 40 hours weekly requirement, and allows the hospital to flex schedules to reduce overtime for those nurses.

This could result in a nurse being required to work 12 hours on one scheduled day and then be scheduled off for a portion of a regularly scheduled day later in the week, simply to avoid paying them overtime. These changes show zero regard to our nurses’ set schedules and our work/life balance.

We strongly disagree with this type of contractual take-away. Nurses make commitments to work when scheduled and regularly go above and beyond to help when asked. The hospital has clarified that such circumstances do not often happen, yet they have been unable to articulate why this proposal is necessary, other than a way to assert their authority.
Why Do Schedules Matter?

Our ONA/CVH team has proposed contract language that would require night shift nurses to have prioritized consecutive night schedules. Studies repeatedly show that having broken sleep schedules (such as one shift on, one shift off) are bad for a person’s health. Night shift work is hard enough without the additional burden of intermittently scheduled night shifts. So far, the hospital has not only declined our proposal but has gone as far as to change schedules for many nurses throughout the month of December. This change has negatively affected many nurses who have had the same schedules for years.

The hospital justified these schedule changes by claiming a need to ensure appropriate skill mix and eliminate scheduling holes. The results of these changes did nothing to positively impact either of those issues; What it did do is negatively impact nurses’ lives outside the hospital by changing their long-standing schedules.

Our ONA/CVH team strongly supports our scheduling proposal, but we also need your support! Email your manager and the CNO to let them know that your schedule is important to patient safety, your safety and your well-being.

ONA/CVH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Are you ready to step up and participate as an ONA/CVH leader?

Three of our nurses have stepped up to represent all the nurses at Coquille Valley Hospital.

Lora Schepp, Lacey Taylor and Courtney Whittaker are our current negotiation team members. They volunteer their time to improve the contract for all nurses at CVH.

We are looking for additional nurses to help support each other and the enforcement of our contract to ensure that CVH is a great place to work.

The time commitments are adjustable from a few hours a month to a few hours every few months. Strong union participation empowers workers to have a safe and healthy work environment.

We have many educational opportunities for those interested in supporting a healthy work environment for all.

For more information contact Lora Schepp or ONA/CVH Labor Representative Susan Bruce at Bruce@OregonRN.org or by phone/text message at 541-261-8359.