COVID-19 News

Since Governor Brown’s announcement of Oregon’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate, many healthcare workers have expressed their questions and concerns. On Sept. 7, Good Shepherd Hospital (GSH) sent an all-staff communication regarding their process for enforcing this mandate. Please check your GSH emails and review if you have not already.

On Sept. 8, ONA/GSH Leaders met with GSH Human Resources (HR) Director Janeen Reding regarding two memorandums of agreements that we developed and proposed to administration. ONA/GSH leaders expressed how receptive administration has been with these proposals our hope to come to an agreement that will be mutual and fair. We discussed topics including offering better incentives, retention bonuses, and COVID-19 vaccination processes and exemptions. We will provide more updates as we continue to meet with administration. Please ensure your email address is updated with ONA to receive communication on this and other important bargaining unit topics.

In the meantime, both ONA and GSH encourage staff who qualify to file for a vaccination exemption.

ONA stewards are the lifeblood of what makes our union strong. A strong union has at least one steward for every unit and shift. Stewards are there to answer colleague’s questions and discuss concerns and help keep every nurse up to date on important union activities. Introductory steward, grievance handling and building worksite power trainings all focused on representing your coworkers and problem-solving workplace issues. Find the training that works best for you!

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www.OregonRN.org/Steward-Training

Topics and Dates

Introductory Steward Training
- Saturday, October 16
- Wednesday, November 17
- Thursday, December 9

Grievance Handling Training
- Saturday, October 9

Building Worksite Power
- Wednesday, November 10
Workforce Liaison

Josh Hall with Oregon AFL-CIO is a workforce liaison that supports workers through separation activities including layoffs, unemployment insurance issues, and health insurance. Josh can also assist with non-worker separation activities including apprenticeships, job fairs, and workers compensation – just to name a few. Josh is available for any questions, particularly those concerning work and the mandate.

“Anytime there is a layoff at a company that has union represented employees I work with the union and local boards to arrange a Rapid Response session. We tailor the session to whatever the union needs for these members but at a minimum we will have presenters from Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Health Insurance, and Title 1 providers.

I personally attend all sessions either in person or virtual to ensure that the members get the information they need from these presentations. I want to make sure they feel confident that they can file an unemployment claim correctly, that they know where to go to apply for health insurance needs, or help with a resume, retraining etc.

From there I continue to support the workers until they are reemployed. So from layoff to reemployment, they can reach out for help. This could be anything from providing direct help with things like UI issues to linking them up to agencies that can provide food services or utility payments. Really a wide range depending on their immediate needs.

Generally, I like to use the local presidents or business agents as the conduit so that the local leaders are always informed and in the loop, but I never turn anyone down who needs help.”

- Josh Hall, Oregon AFL-CIO workforce liaison (2021)

If you are in need of help, contact Josh by phone at (541) 990-3518 or email Josh@oraflcio.org.

Nurses and the COVID-19 Vaccine

As one of the most trusted professions, nurses play a key role in preventing the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19 by accepting and encouraging vaccination.

ONA drafted a position statement on the vaccine last December that notes nurses have a commitment to the communities they serve to be well-informed about the vaccines. The position statement encourages nurses to lead the way in getting vaccinated and provide an example for everyone else!

The American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (2015) states that RNs have an ethical responsibility to “model the same health maintenance and health promotion measures that they teach and research”, and this responsibility includes vaccination against infectious disease.

The ANA policy Statement on Immunizations emphasizes that nurses should be advocating, educating, and advising patients to receive Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommended vaccinations, but acknowledges that if nurses are declining the vaccine themselves, public trust is damaged.

Do your part, get the vaccine and advocate for others to do the same!

Visit the ONA COVID-19 vaccine resource center to learn more: www.OregonRN.org/COVID-vaccine.