ONA: Bargaining for COVID-19 Protections in a Pandemic

Your ONA leaders at all four Samaritan Health Services bargaining units have listened to your challenges in caring for patients throughout this ongoing pandemic. We will offer a side letter to the employer that focuses on the vital concerns you have raised to us, especially paid leave for COVID-19 quarantine and for other infectious diseases. We heard you share these ideas with us:

- Paid administrative leave when the employer requires us to quarantine due to COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, until we return to work, instead of requiring us to use our earned leave (PTO). Worker’s compensation may be used to pay a portion of these wages but paid administrative leave will make nurses whole.
- The employer shall provide nurses with notice of work exposure within eight hours of known exposure.
- A detailed and safe procedure for nurses to refuse unsafe assignments.
- Absences due to COVID-19 or other infectious diseases shall not be used to discipline nurses.
- Vulnerable nurses may request accommodation and leave.
- The employer shall absorb the cost of screening and drive through testing for all nurses in our bargaining unit.

We have engaged with you, now we are ready to engage Samaritan Health Services (SHS), our employer. We have scheduled a meeting with SHS for next Wednesday, October 28 from 9 – 11 a.m. for a remote bargaining session.

We will develop a bold proposal, which we will present to the employer as a systemwide COVID-19 side letter. In drafting our proposal, we will balance the needs of our patients, our communities, ourselves and our employer.
We need your help to show SHS that we are unified on this issue. Many nurses at Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center will be wearing buttons to show their support that day.

Others are displaying car signs like the one below.

SHS needs to see our unity! Nurses cannot wait to resolve these issues. We want to be prepared for the possibility of a COVID-19 surge this winter!

Are you willing to help support our team as they bargain? Please print the car sign to display next Wednesday, Oct. 28 at work and around town.

Other nurses and health care workers throughout Oregon have won these benefits. SHS employees are still waiting to receive them! It is time for Samaritan Health Services to step up and protect us, just like we protect our patients.

Our experience is that SHS rarely moves in bargaining unless we show our solidarity. What actions can you take to show that you support our proposal? We need your help to demonstrate our unity!

We will share our complete proposal with all of you in our bargaining units next week.

If you have any questions, please contact your ONA labor representative, local executive team leaders or stewards.