

Home Health and Hospice Meeting a Success!

Dear Home Health and Hospice nurses,

Our first meeting of Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) nurses who work in home health and hospice (HH&H) from various parts our state was a success. We met on Wednesday, May 16, in Springfield and shared concerns common to our community of practice. We agreed that we need to return nursing to the centerpiece of our patient care. Too often, other issues become hurdles that thwart the nurses' voice as we visit our patients in their homes.

We found commonalities among a number of issues, but particularly were struck by the lack of staffing guidelines in any of our facilities. Further, the employer overstresses the role of productivity measures, which are often flawed standards (e.g., unrealistic times for admissions or inadequate time allocated for patient visits).

We identified strong contractual language in a couple of our contracts for which others may not be aware. For example, Providence Home Health and Hospice (PHHH) allows productivity to be brought to their Professional Nursing Care Committee (PNCC) before any changes are made. At Mercy Medical Center (MMC), our collective bargaining agreement requires the employer to follow the staffing law for HH&H, even though it is not required by the staffing law. So, the HH&H staffing plan must be approved by the Mercy house-wide nurse staffing committee, just like other units in the hospital.

Our group would like to explore more opportunities that bring together home health and hospice nurses from across the state. For example, should we become a "special interest group" within ONA, which is a formal entity that can access resources like monies and staff support? Would we like to organize a regular conference with an educational focus to support our community of practice?

Our group recognizes that nearly 600 ONA nurse-members work in HH&H. Since many of those positions cluster in the Portland metro area and Lane County environs, we decided to rotate our initial meetings between Tualatin and Eugene.

Three nurse-leaders stepped forward to form a temporary executive team until our next meeting. Allison Hyder (Sacred Heart Home Care Services (SHHCS) in Eugene), Johnny Slye (Mercy Medical Center in Roseburg) and Kris Anderson (Peace Harbor

Medical Center (PHMC) in Florence) agreed to shepherd our group as interim leaders. We appreciate their service to begin organizing our community of practice.

Our Next Meeting Is:

Saturday, July 21

10:30 a.m. – noon

Third Floor Conference Room, ONA offices

18765 SW Boones Ferry Rd, Tualatin OR, 97062

To be followed by lunch provided by your ONA dues.

*RSVP to your Labor Representative Christine Hauck at
Hauck@OregonRN.org.*

At this meeting, we will select another temporary executive team to continue the work. Further, we would like to share best practices in empowering nurses at our next meeting. We would like documented information to help us understand and improve patient care in HH&H. For example, do patient satisfaction scores suffer as staffing levels decline? Please bring any relevant information and documents to share with others.

We also hope to learn how we might amend the current Oregon Hospital Nurse Staffing Law to include home health and hospice services. Please plan to attend.