Bargaining Continues

The negotiating team would like to recognize the incredible contributions of both the Contract Action Team (CAT) members and the general nursing body for their most recent contributions at the bargaining session. From the green signature boards and the personal nursing statements to the constant presence of the nurses in the audience, the increased participation and unity is noticeable.

We had our seventh session of bargaining with the employer on July 15. We made progress on several articles and had some extremely open and constructive back and forth with our employer’s team. We tentatively agreed (TA’d) on one article. It was not a significant article, but progress is progress. In general, the session was quite positive. The biggest disappointment is the employer’s reluctance to present a counter offer to our compensation article. Administration expressed a desire to “clean up” some of the outstanding articles prior to tackling the compensation article. With so many of the outstanding articles hinging on some aspect of the compensation article, your negotiating team would like to see the compensation counter prior

Continued on page 2

Next bargaining session:
Monday, July 22
Ancillary Education Room

Pictured: “We Stand in Unity” posters signed by GSRMC nurses.
Bargaining Continues (continued from page 1)

to agreeing to many of the outstanding articles.

Both sides noted the difference in atmosphere and respect from the other at this bargaining compared to many in recent memory. We would like to attribute much of that change to our staff’s involvement and interest. The CAT members have been an enormous asset to keeping communication between the nursing body and the negotiating team open. We cannot give enough credit to all of you for the spirit of collaboration at the current bargaining.

We would like to remind everyone to attend the next negotiating session on July 22. The executive team has ballots for voting on the change to the ONA/GSRMC bylaws to allow for electronic voting for future elections and votes. Please note that this is not a vote on the contract.

Paid Medical Leave for Oregon Workers

After decades of work, including detailed policy research and development, state agency engagement and stakeholder coalition building, Universal Paid Family and Medical Leave finally passed in Oregon, following an intense and prolonged effort to advance the legislation this session. House Bill 2005 requires that for businesses with more than 25 employees, both employers and employees will pay into a shared state fund every month. For small employers, employees will pay in and employers will still have the option to contribute. The bill will operate like social security or unemployment insurance where an employee will file a claim with the agency when they have a qualifying medical event (i.e. child birth, adoption, illness of a loved one, or their own illness) and would be able to draw down from the fund, while their normal salary could be used by the employer to hire temporary help. Critically, the program is also:

- Available to all Oregonians, regardless of their income or employer size.
- Recognizes different family types.
- Protects workers from discrimination and retaliation for using the program.
- Includes progressive wage replacement based on the employee’s salary where the lowest wage workers will be able to collect their entire salary.
- Guarantees up to 12 weeks of paid time off including an additional two weeks for anything pregnancy-related. For employees covered by OFLA, they could take an additional four weeks of unpaid leave.

After garnering bipartisan support in both the House and Senate the bill was signed into law. Over the next several years, the state will commence the administration of the program and in January 2022 employer and employee contributions will begin. By January 2023 or when the fund is fully solvent, employees will start to be able to file claims to receive the benefit.

This is a significant victory for workers and families across Oregon – including within the broader nursing workforce, which will now have guaranteed access to dedicated paid leave separate from sick days or personal time off – and for patients who will realize improved health outcomes from being able to take the time to care for themselves or their loved ones.

REMINdERS

- Vote on the ballot measure to update the ONA/GSRMC bylaws to allow for electronic voting.
- Please thank a CAT member for all of their hard work!