

Samaritan Nurse News



Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) at Samaritan Lebanon Communities Hospital (SLCH)

July 3, 2013

ONA Bargaining Team Members

Nancy McPherson RN
Bargaining Unit

Dana Wheeler, RN
ED

Lisa Brown, RN
Girod Center

Louise Franklin RN
ICU

Lisa Logsdon, RN
ACU

ONA Labor Relations Representative

Christine Hauck
503-302-1813
hauck@oregonrn.org

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ONA Commits Additional Resources to SLCH, GSRMC Bargaining



Hank Kaplan, ONA's new lead negotiator for GSRMC bargaining.

In response to a swath of takeaways that the employer is pushing for at both the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center (GSRMC) and SLCH tables (see details on Page 2), ONA has taken the unprecedented step of retaining the services of an outside labor attorney to take over the role of lead negotiator for GSRMC new contract. This move will free up Christine Hauck, our ONA Labor Relations Representative, so that she can focus more of her time on negotiations at SLCH and on running full-scale contract campaigns at both facilities.

ONA's new lead bargainer at GSRMC, Hank Kaplan, is an attorney at Bennett, Hartman, Morris & Kaplan, a well-respected labor firm in Oregon that does work on behalf of unions and working people.

Kaplan brings a long and impressive resume with him to the GSRMC bargaining table. He graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1977 with a degree in philosophy of science, did graduate work in philosophy at University of Pittsburgh, and then entered New York University School of Law, where he received his law degree in 1981. After serving as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Gus Solomon, Kaplan was admitted to both the Oregon and New York State Bar Associations in 1983. His practice includes public and private sector labor law, collective bargaining, employment litigation, individual employment contracts, wage litigation, employment benefits litigation, and workplace technology and privacy issues.

ONA notified Samaritan last week of the abovementioned staffing changes. In response, GSRMC announced that they will be bringing in help from their own attorney, Jacqueline Damm, who works for the Bullard Law firm. Bullard does litigation and representation work on behalf of employers (as opposed to on behalf of workers). We do not yet know the employer's plan for bargaining at the SLCH table.

As Kaplan and the GSRMC team meet to prepare for the next bargaining sessions, Hauck will be meeting with the SLCH team to work on a coordinated strategy in support of a fair contract. Hauck will also be out and about in both workplaces—making rounds, recruiting and training new contract action teams (CATs), and helping to prepare nurses to escalate activity in support of a fair contract that respects the important role nurses at SLCH and GSRMC play in providing safe, quality care for our community.

By working more collaboratively with our colleagues at GSRMC and supporting one another in bargaining, we'll both achieve stronger contracts and better outcomes for our patients. Please help us in welcoming Hank Kaplan to the ONA team!

Summary of ONA Versus Employer Proposals So Far

Article Affected	ONA's Position	The Employer's Position	Why We're Standing Strong
Article 2: Association Membership	All nurses contribute their fair share towards the cost of bargaining and enforcing our ONA contract.	Becky Pape has stated that it's not the board of directors holding this language up, but a decision by management.	Our union is stronger when every nurse has a vested interest in it. When we go to the table with full membership, the employer takes us more seriously.
Article 10: Paid Time Off (PTO)	We responded to the employer's proposal with a resounding "NOT INTERESTED."	SLCH proposed PTO accrual bank will remain 550 hours with a use it or lose provision.	Many nurses rely on PTO accrual to plan for emergencies. Furthermore, nurses have reported that they are often unable to utilize their PTO because the employer isn't providing adequate floor coverage.
Article 18: Health Insurance	We proposed a ZERO percent increase in health insurance premiums.	SLCH has proposed a 15% increase on premiums for nurses. They have also proposed that all "single" plan members pay 15% of their premium starting in 2014.	We think nurses deserve affordable health insurance, especially since they work for a healthcare system that owns the plan and has the ability to set the rates.
Article 19: Retirement	We proposed elimination of the two tiered system for tax shelter annuity (TSA)	SLCH is not interested in removing the two-tiered system.	ONA team thinks it's important to support all nurses in planning for their retirement.
New Article Successors	We proposed successor language, which preserves our union should the hospital be sold or merge with another facility.	SLCH doesn't think this is important, as according to management no sale or merger in the near future	We've heard rumors that Samaritan Health Systems (SHS) is shopping around for a merger/buyout. Our ONA team thinks its important to protect the rights of all nurses should a change in ownership actually happen.
New Article Disciplinary	We proposed that disciplinary notices should become invalid after two years.	SLCH has rejected this proposal, stating they take all things into account.	We think it's unfair to escalate disciplinary action against nurses for something they did more than two years ago.
Appendix A: Wages	We proposed a 3.5% cost-of-living adjustment each year of the contract	SLCH has proposed .5% each year of the contract.	The ONA team thinks that nurse wages should keep up with the consumer price index (CPI).
Appendix D: Two Tier System	We proposed eliminating this provision.	SLCH has proposed removing the 8,000 hours worked to new hires will remain at lower benefits permanently	It's not fair for younger/newer nurses to earn at a lower rate of benefits.

Pre-register Now to Join the CAT!

Winning a strong contract for nurses at SLCH is the top priority for this year's bargaining team. However, improvements in our contract won't come without a fight. The ONA team, made up of RNs from around the hospital who have volunteered their time to advocate on our behalf, needs help from the rest of us to win.

A functioning Contract Action Team (CAT) is our best bet to win real improvements in our contract for SLCH nurses. The CAT is sort of like a modified phone tree, where nurses from around the hospital volunteer to be point people for communication in their unit. Our goal is to have ten percent of nurses from each unit volunteer to be CAT members. That way, the load is lightened for everyone and we can ensure that nurses on the floor (or in the field) are connected to the bargaining process in a meaningful way.

A CAT training will be scheduled at to SLCH soon (dates TBA), but you can add your name to the waiting list by contacting Christine Hauck at Hauck@oregonrn.org