McKenzie-Willamette Bargaining Begins Wednesday

We will begin bargaining with our employer this Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Due to the pandemic, we are bargaining remotely via Zoom meeting. Our key issue is wage parity.

According to ONA calculations, McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center pays nurses an average of 3.4% less than Sacred Heart Medical Center. Lower wages at our facility makes it more difficult to recruit and retain nurses.

Patient safety is directly affected by lower wages at our hospital, because it means fewer nurses in each unit and higher turnover of nurses. Moreover, Sacred Heart nurses will receive an additional 3% across the board increase on July 1, 2020, which will put us even further behind.

On Friday, June 19, our executive committee met one last time before heading into bargaining. We used Zoom to explore its functionality for our purposes. All three of our executive committee members (Chair Curt Stupasky, Secretary-Treasurer Crow Bolt, and Candy Bigbee) were able to participate without difficulty.

On Wednesday in our first bargaining session, we will collaborate with the employer to establish ground rules for remote bargaining, calendar future bargaining sessions, and discuss our COVID-19 side letter, which we provided to the employer on May 28. See our side letter proposal here. We will also present our initial proposals to the employers.
Employer's Financial Situation

We know the employer can afford to pay us more wages, because they have been the most profitable major hospital in Oregon for six consecutive years. See our newsletter from last June for details. We don’t have the 2019 figures because the Oregon Health Authority has extended the deadline for hospitals to report their financial records during the pandemic.

We’ll provide you with more details on wages and the employer’s financial situation in our update after that bargaining session, so watch your email.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact any executive officer or our labor rep, Gary Aguiar, text/call 605-690-3107 or email Aguiar@OregonRN.org.