Three Agreements in 24 Hours!

Our bargaining team Chair Curt Stupasky (SCU), Secretary-Treasurer Crow Bolt, (ED), executive committee member Candy Bigbee (WHBCC) and labor representative Gary Aguiar remotely negotiated side letters on COVID-19 and Mandatory Call using Zoom.

We Reached Agreement on Side Letters on COVID-19, Mandatory Call and DI Inclusion

In a 24-hour period on Wed. Aug., 12 and Thurs., Aug. 13, our bargaining unit reached agreements on three separate side letters. Spanning six bargaining sessions, we finally moved the employer to offer two weeks of pandemic sick leave in our COVID-19 side letter.

Simultaneously, our team reached an agreement to freeze existing Mandatory Call practices, which also requires the employer to bargain any changes with us. Our third side letter allows us to welcome Diagnostic Imaging (DI) nurses into our bargaining unit!

Throughout these bargaining sessions, our discussions with the employer’s team was cordial and professional. Of course, we disagreed on some items, but the tenor of the conversation was dramatically different than the last round of bargaining. Chief nursing officer Desi Shubin, Human Resources Director Julie Cavinee and Corporate Human Resources staffer Jan Ellis (who is based in southern Nevada) constitute their team.

Even though we conducted our

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sessions remotely via Zoom, we built relationships and understandings among the seven participants. We laid a good foundation for bargaining our full contract early next year.

**COVID-19 Side Letter**

Last week, we moved the employer to break from its previous position of no separate leave bank for benefited nurses who test positive for COVID-19. [Click here](#) to see the side letter. This week, we shared evidence from local hospitals and two hospital systems that offered 80 hours or 14 days of pandemic sick leave.

The employer agreed that the community standard in Oregon is two weeks of a separate leave bank!

The employer has notified us that this benefit, which we bargained, will be extended to all McKenzie-Willamette employees. We understand no other Quorum Health Corporation employees have a separate pandemic sick leave bank.

Our initial proposals included pandemic sick leave for resource nurses. We presented evidence and propositions on why resource nurses should be included. However, the employer was not going to move on this issue. They contended that no other Oregon hospital offered pandemic sick leave to employees who are below 0.5 FTE, which is supported by our research.

**Mandatory Call Side Letter**

In our second session discussing our Mandatory Call proposal, we reached an agreement that all current call practices in the procedural units will be frozen and the employer must bargain with us before making changes. Further, the employer cannot institute Mandatory Call where it does not currently exist without bargaining with us. [Click here](#) to see the side letter.

We were disappointed that the employer was unwilling to end Mandatory Call in the Women’s Health, Birth, and Child Center (WHBCC) immediately as we had proposed. However, the employer’s team agreed to continue negotiating with us on a separate side letter on call in WHBCC.

A special shout out to ONA executive committee member Candy Bigbee and our stewards in WHBCC (Angie Kimani, Fie McWilliams and Chris Frederick) who championed the Mandatory Call freeze for all departments. This group will now return to discussions with other WHBCC nurses to develop further evidence and brainstorm ideas. We have scheduled a bargaining session on September 4, where Curt Stupaksy and Crow Bolt have committed to continue their support and advocacy for WHBCC nurses.

**DI Inclusion Side Letter**

In a surprise announcement last month, the employer invited us to bargain a side letter to facilitate the inclusion of Diagnostic Imaging (DI) nurses into our bargaining unit. ONA leaders have been in discussion with these IV Therapy nurses for several years to bring them in via a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election.

The employer’s assent to the side letter bypassed the NLRB process. [Click here](#) to see the side letter. In record time, we agreed to bring in the six DI positions immediately. In less than 45 minutes of total bargaining

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time, the employer accepted our initial proposal without offering a counter proposal.

We welcome Tiffeny Jennings and Steve Smith, the two benefited DI nurses, as well as Tanya Robbins and Eva Lunnemann, the two DI resource nurses. We bargained remotely using Zoom. Tiffeny and Steve represented their department in negotiations.

DI nurses will enjoy all of the rights and privileges of being part of our bargaining unit as detailed in our collective bargaining agreement. This includes the Weingarten right to representation in an investigatory meeting, just cause principles, progressive discipline, scheduling, posting, differentials, layoff provisions and all the other wonderful provisions that more than forty years of bargaining at McKenzie-Willamette have produced. They will receive wages based on our contract wage scale beginning Aug. 16, 2020.

**Wound Care Clinic**

When the employer invited us to negotiate the DI inclusion, we inquired whether they would be willing to extend the same courtesy to nurses in our Wound Care clinic. The employer declined the opportunity to do so. So, we will proceed to use the NLRB election process.ONA leaders had also been having conversations to include Wound Care nurses for several years.

Wound Care, which comprises two locations, one in the main Springfield hospital and another on West 11th St. in Eugene, with a total of ten nurses. Within a 24-hour period, 100 percent of those nurses signed an authorization card, which will support our NLRB petition.

100% of McKenzie-Willamette Wound Care Clinic nurses signed authorization cards to petition the NLRB for an inclusion election. Pictured, in the front row is Tish Ericson, and in the back row, from the left, is Gary Jackson, Nook Kaneko, and Misty Young.

We anticipate the NLRB will hold an election in a few weeks. Then, we will proceed to bargain a side letter, similar to DI, to include Wound Care nurses in our bargaining unit. Bonnie Chase, Jordana Plantz and Tish Ericson have championed our efforts among their colleagues. We hope to welcome them into our bargaining unit before the end of the year!

**Rollover Insert Now Available**

Our 2020 – 2021 “rollover” contract is now available to insert into our current printed contract. Our executive committee distributed copies of the two-page insert, click here to download insert. Or go to: www.OregonRN.org/70 and follow link
Pandemic Assistance & Unemployment Benefits

Lost Hours?
Nurses across the country are losing hours due to COVID-19. We led the nation by winning critical COVID-19 contract protections including 80 hours of sick leave and administrative pay. However, Providence has let those protections expire. We are fighting to win back key COVID-19 provisions for nurses at the bargaining table but we are also exploring new options to support you, including encouraging nurses to apply for unemployment benefits or pandemic unemployment assistance.

If you’re being low censused you may qualify for either benefit.

Unemployment Benefits
If you are losing hours and worked at least 500 hours last year OR earned more than $1,000 last year and worked throughout the year, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

For most nurses, if you were paid less than $648 in a week, you’re likely eligible. Note: Unemployment is not a substitute for paid leave. If you used paid leave to fill in for hours you would normally be working, unemployment benefits will not cover those hours.

Benefits range from $151/week to $648/week per person. Individuals are eligible to receive 1.25 percent of your yearly earnings per week.


Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
Even if you don’t qualify for regular unemployment benefits, people out of work due to COVID-19 are eligible for pandemic assistance.

Assistance ranges from $205/week to $648/week. You can receive 1.25 percent of your yearly earnings per week.

How Do I Apply? Apply for pandemic unemployment assistance click here, or go to:
https://govstatus.egov.com/PUA

Please note that this is not legal advice. This summary is based on our understanding of Employment Department rules. If you have a legal question, you should speak with an attorney. ONA members receive a free half-hour consultation with a local law firm as a member benefit.

Contact information is available at the ONA website. www.oregonrn.org/485