McKenzie-Willamette Tentative Agreement Reached!

We reached a full tentative agreement (TA) on a new successor collective bargaining agreement for nurses employed at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center. Our negotiators recommend a YES vote on ratification, which we will announce in the coming days. We will provide more details on the changes to our contract but see the highlights below.

In our third mediation session on May 10, 2021, our final package included provisions that will bring nearly every nurse to wage parity with Sacred Heart.

- We will receive a 3.25% across the board wage increase in the first full pay period after ratification, 3.0% in first full pay period after June 1, 2022, and 3.0%, in first full payroll period after June 1, 2023.
- We increase standby base rate to $5.25/hour and holiday rate of $7.875/hour, best in our region, possibly statewide.
- We accepted the employer’s proposal to consolidate eight- and ten-hour wage scale into our 12-hour wage scale over the course of the three-year contract. 1.4% increase at ratification, 1.4% in first full pay period after June 1, 2022, and complete consolidation in first full pay period after June 1, 2023.
- Float Pool Nurses of $2/hour.
- Reduced gap to single year steps between 6 – 7 and 7 – 8.
- For the first time in our contract, we partial wage replacement when we are low censused. Here’s the new language: 12.2.5 Wage Replacement for Low Census: “When a nurse’s earned leave bank is below forty (40) hours at the end of the previous pay period and the nurse is unable to work seventy-five percent (75%) of their FTE in a pay period due to low census involuntary cancellation, the nurse shall be paid seventy percent (70%) of their regular wages for
hours involuntarily cancelled beyond twenty-five percent (25%) of their FTE. Any OIP, OSIP, SIP hours in the pay period do not count towards wage replacement qualification (see 12.2.2 #3 for definitions). The low census percentage calculation is independent from wage replacement qualification (see 12.2.4)."

We were able to win these improvements in working conditions because McKenzie-Willamette nurses increased their participation in ONA activities. In November 2019, we assessed that only 18% of our bargaining unit had participated in an ONA activity. In this bargaining round, 51% of nurses joined in at least one job action, a nearly tripling of our participation rate.

ONA nurses at McKenzie-Willamette have not been this active since McKenzie-Willamette nurses went on the longest nurses’ strike in Oregon history, for nearly three months in 1981! Our field team leafletted, rounded, called, texted, and had conversations with hundreds of nurses. These dedicated educational efforts produced the turnout, which moved the employer.

As a result of these efforts, we made substantial gains in our seven bargaining sessions this year.

We believe these four changes are the best language in any ONA contract:

- Very strong shared governance, including increased transparency and democracy to empower in Staffing Committee and Unit Practice Committees.
- Vacancies filled by most senior qualified nurse, which eliminates loopholes for managers to hire favorites.
- Certification differential increase to $2/hour, from previous $1/hour.
- ONA Education funds and hours determined by formula, tied to number of nurses in bargaining unit, effectively automatic annual increases.

Our major victories for us in this contract include:

- New bilingual skills certification $2/hour
- Increase BSN differentials to 3% and MSN to 4%, from current 2%/3% respectively.
- Short Stay allowed time off based on two shifts (am/pm), instead of one shift as previously.
- PACU allowed 2 nurses off at one time, instead of one previously.
- Strengthened reorganization section, which increase notice to 30 days with master announced before bidding. Bidding will occur by skill code. Ties in seniority determined by lot.
- New hires may receive full credit for prior experience.
- Nurses required to float to only one unit, instead of current two, except as a sitter.
- For layoffs, house-wide means those currently in BU, not managers and unrepresented RNs as currently.
- Christmas Eve night shift differential begins 1830 for that shift, instead of midnight to midnight, fixing a decades-old problem.
- Gender neutral language throughout contract
- Improved new employer orientation process.
- Nurse can now donate 10 PTO hours to bargaining team, up from five hours previously.
- Grievance process revised to encourage informal resolution with lowest level supervisor, clarify deadlines, includes possible mediation.

Quick report on our survey: 71% (281 of 395 nurses) responded to our survey last week. In the bargaining unit, 54% reported they would participate in an information picket, 40% said they would participate in a community meeting, and 36% said they would strike. Nurses reported solidarity by agreeing with this statement: “I will do whatever it takes to get wage parity and increase standby pay.” Fifty-one percent (200 nurses) scored themselves as seven or higher on this intensity scale!
If you have any questions, please contact your ONA labor representatives, Gary Aguiar at Aguiar@OregonRN.org.