MWMC Update – November 10, 2021

We appreciate your efforts to care for our community members during this long pandemic. Your work demonstrates the value of nurses!

New Executive Committee Members

Please welcome and thank Angie Kimani (WHBCC) and Clarissa Varihue (CCU), who recently joined our executive committee. Candy Bigbee from WHBCC continues as our Chair with Crow Bolt from ED as Secretary-Treasurer. If you know of others who are interested, we still have three vacancies.

Genuine Collaboration Effort?

Desi Shubin, the chief nursing officer, reached out to us with an ambiguous ask to collaborate on nurse staffing. Our executive committee held a meeting with her. She wanted to brainstorm ideas about “alternate patient care delivery models.” We did not understand what she was asking from us at the meeting. It sounded like she wanted to find ways to perform nursing care outside the bounds of our contract. Our committee expressed empathy with the employer’s current situation and relayed that nurses want to help during the pandemic. However, we will not give up hard-earned gains in our contract. Read the communications exchange here.

Association Grievances

In recent months, we filed several Association grievances around staffing and other issues. These grievances bring together affected nurses from several departments to address these matters directly with our employer.

In these cases, the employer moved forward without consulting with us. After agreeing to shared governance in our recent contract, we had hoped they would embrace the principle of collaboration.

- FLOAT TO ONE UNIT
On August 2, we filed an association grievance against violations the employer made regarding floating nurses to more than one unit and without safe orientation. These floating violations were made prior to the declared state of emergency.
To resolve the grievance, we proposed a side letter to enforce the orientation procedures and nurses’ selection of unit to which to float. In trade, we suggested we would move back to floating to two units.

We require more staff input going forward with the floating grievance. We have created a survey to help give us more insight into this issue. Please take a minute to fill this out today: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/93KWLLX

**STAFFING RATIOS**

On August 17, we filed an Association grievance over the unilateral change in staffing ratios in the Emergency Services (ED) department and the four inpatient units: Medical Care Unit, Surgical Care Unit, Progressive Care Unit and Critical Care Unit.

These changes were made in contravention to the law, as the state had yet to declare a public health emergency at that time. In a non-emergency situation, decisions about Staffing Plans—including staffing ratios—are made by our Hospital Nurse Staffing Committee. The Oregon Hospital Nurse Staffing Law does not authorize the employer to declare a crisis or emergency, rather emergencies must be declared by a governmental body.

We seek your input on this grievance. What remedy or resolution are we willing to accept? Please contact our labor rep, Gary Aguiar, text/call 503-444-0690 or Aguiar@OregonRN.org or Crow Bolt (ED mid shift) who is our lead steward on this grievance.

**PROCEDURAL UNITS**

On August 30, we filed an Association grievance over many scheduling and pay changes that began on August 23, 2021 in our procedural units. We said nurses want to help during this crisis! Nurses want to use their skills to care for those who are unwell, including those infected with the Delta variant of COVID-19. We acknowledged the Oregon Health Authority declared a public health emergency on August 18, 2021.

However, our contract continues to control in our bargained language on relevant working conditions. Restated, the emergency declaration does not abrogate our contract. The employer’s actions violated provisions of our collective bargaining agreement. According to §9.4, if a nurse is assigned to a different start time (or window), the hours outside of their regular schedule are paid at 1.5X. For any work on non-scheduled shifts or weekends, the nurse shall earn the appropriate shift and/or weekend differential. If a nurse is offered double time for a non-scheduled shift, the double time should be offered to the unit nurses first, then to other units (§9.18).

We honor nurses’ commitment to patient care by volunteering for other units and shifts. However, nurses should be paid properly for working weekends and nights. Moreover, the employer violated §12.3.7 by undertaking these partial unit closures, unit mergers, and reassignments without consulting with the Association. We are asking to be consulted and collaborate on a resolution.
We want to hear from you about this grievance. Please contact our labor rep, Gary Aguiar, text/call 503-444-0690 or Aguia@OregonRN.org or Joe Walch (PACU) who is our lead steward on this grievance.

- **BILINGUAL CERTIFICATION**
  On October 29, we filed an Association grievance demanding the employer identify a test for nurses to demonstrate their proficiency for the Bilingual Skills Certification Differential (§9.13). Our agreement has been in force since we ratified on May 28, 2021 (§19.5). Nurses have been more than patient and are eager to demonstrate their language skills.

  We called for the employer to identify a test on or before December 1, 2021. We insisted that any nurse who successfully completes the test on or before March 1, 2022 and notifies the employer with the required documents by April 1, 2022 shall receive retroactive pay for all hours worked since July 13, 2021.

  Please contact our labor rep, Gary Aguiar, text/call 503-444-0690 or Aguia@OregonRN.org or Allie Modesto (MCU night shift) who is our lead steward on this grievance.

**OFNHP to Strike at Kaiser**

Nurses and other health care workers are striking Kaiser Permanente facilities in the Willamette Valley. The Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Care Professionals (OFNHP)—members of our sibling union—need our support! Ninety percent of the bargaining unit turned out to vote and 96% authorized their leaders to call a strike.

Among the onerous Kaiser proposals is a two-tier wage structure, where new hires would be placed on a lower wage scale. If one hospital in Oregon gets tiered wages into a contract, others will try the same thing. Learn more here: Oregon Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals (aft.org)

Their fight is our right! We are asking ONA nurses not to cross the strike line anywhere. Obviously, please do not accept a per diem or traveler position at any Kaiser facility.

Their situation is fluid, but we know the strike will begin 6:00 a.m., Monday, November 15 at metro area locations and possibly at Salem clinics. The strike is open-ended.

Since we gave ten-days’ notice to the employer at the same time that OFNHP did, we can support OFHNP in job actions, including walking the strike line.

We hope to create a Mutual Aid Committee to prepare for supportive actions and respond to OFNHP requests. Please contact our labor rep if you want to help.

Since many McKenzie-Willamette nurses discussed a strike during bargaining earlier this year, we can gain insights by joining them on the strike line and talking to those nurses. Also, here’s a free booklet: How to Strike and Win.