Oct. 22, 2019

Executive Committee

PRESIDENT:
Curtis Stupasky, RN
SCU

SECRETARY/ TREASURER:
Jeffrey Crow, RN
ED

MEMBER:
Ruth Candy Bigbee, RN
WHBCC

ONA Labor Representative:
Gary Aguiar
503-444-0690
Aguiar@OregonRN.org

McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center (MCW)
Newsletter
Voice of Nurses Since 1904

OHA Finds More Staffing Violations

Acuity Tool and Documentation of Meal/Breaks Required
Our employer once again was found to be in violation of Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law by a state agency. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recently responded to a complaint filed with their office last year.

OHA’s visit to McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center on Aug. 28, 2019 revealed that nurses working in the Medical Care Unit on April 28, 2018 did not get the proper meals and breaks as required by state law and our contract. Once again, our employer failed to ensure that nurses were properly rested to perform their jobs.

The 2019 report also showed that the employer failed to ensure that each patient in MCU was properly assessed for both acuity and intensity. OHA stated that every patient on every unit must be assessed on every shift using an approved acuity tool. Click here to read the report.

The hospital has learned little from their previous failure. In February 2018, OHA reported 20 staffing law violations with 120 findings in a 46-page report that was among the lengthiest reports statewide. In that report, OHA also found that the employer failed to ensure nurses received all of their meals and breaks in four departments. Click here to learn more.

Acuity Tools are Essential for Safe Staffing
At the Staffing Committee meeting held on Oct. 2, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) summarized the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) report. She advocated for a single acuity tool to be used house-wide. Nurses pointed out that specialty units like ED, WH and the procedural units cannot use the same tool as the floors.

Nurses agree that an acuity tool that measures both acuity and intensity is a necessary instrument to assign appropriate nursing skill mix. A functional tool should include clinical conditions as well as social-psychological attributes, like language spoken.

The patient’s score is aggregated with other patients in each nurse’s team so that it does not exceed the staffing plan’s criteria. It is important that all parties, especially house coordinators, understand and use this tool properly.

Nurses should work together to develop strong acuity tools. At ONA, we have seen good tools that employ check boxes on a single page, which takes a couple minutes to complete.

(Continued to page 2)
OHA Finds More Staffing Violations

Buddy Breaks Violate the Law (Continued from page 1)
Both the 2018 and 2019 OHA reports on MCW state that buddy breaks are unacceptable because one nurse takes a patient team that exceeds the stated staffing ratio. The OHA report on St. Charles Bend in 2017 authoritatively states that buddy breaks are a violation of the staffing law. Click here and refer to pages 33-37.

All nurses recognize that meals and breaks are important for them to perform at the top of their practice. A rested nurse is a safe nurse.

Meal breaks must be documented to ensure that every nurse gets all of their required breaks. The Board of Nursing recognizes that patients are NOT a nurse’s responsibility when they are on break.

Instead, the employer is required by law to ensure those patients receive care from another nurse. The nurse who takes responsibility cannot safely care for their patients and another’s patients.

Further, a nurse who assumes responsibility for another nurse on break must have time to care for those patients’ needs completely, including med passes, restroom breaks, etc.

Finally, charge nurses do not have the bandwidth to cover a floor nurse’s patients, because they have substantial responsibilities of their own. It is physically impossible for a charge nurse to cover meals and breaks for each member of the nursing staff in a shift.

Fiscally Responsible?
The employer will frequently assert that they will meet the law but must be “fiscally responsible.” Exceeding the staffing ratio at any time, except in a true emergency, is a violation of Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law. If patient volume exceeds patient ratio, the hospital may take these steps:

- Ask nurses who are not scheduled to work, if they are willing to work that shift.
- Move patients to other units within the hospital, as long as patient acuity and intensity does not exceed the nursing skill mix as stated in the staffing plan.
- Find another facility which has staff capacity to accept patients.

Remember, McKenzie-Willamette budgets are an artificial construct determined by Quorum Health Corporation accountants in Tennessee, not Oregon nurses. Our unique staffing law requires that nurses have the primary voice in patient care issues. In fact, our employer has a wealth of funds to provide adequate nursing staff. McKenzie-Willamette has been the most profitable major hospital in Oregon for each of the last six years.

In the last five years, our hospital has generated more than a $250 billion dollars in profits for Quorum. Moreover, we are Quorum’s flagship hospital by earning more money than any of the other 25 corporate hospitals.

In truth, hospitals across the state have struggled to comply with Oregon’s staffing law because they refuse to embrace the law’s principle of shared governance. If the employer were genuinely interested in meeting the law’s requirements, they should talk to ONA nurses. We are eager to work with them to ensure our hospital has no staffing law violations in the future.
Our executive committee (Curt Stupasky, Crow Bolt and Candy Bigbee) is anticipating bargaining to begin in early summer and they are already preparing.

In their planning, our team has developed an initial list of proposals. We intend to identify one or two major themes around which we can build solidarity. They are also developing a survey and have calendared bargaining tasks. Our contract expires Sept. 1, 2020.

Support our Bargaining Team!

✦ Attend an Executive Committee meeting. (See the schedule below.)
✦ Volunteer for the Contract Action Team. CATs liaise between floor nurses and our bargaining team. We will hold trainings in January and February.
✦ Watch for our survey coming in 2020. (Encourage others to complete it as well.)

Executive Committee Meetings

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 20, 2019</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9:30—11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Willamette Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10, 2020</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9:30—11:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>February 7, 2020</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>March 9, 2020</td>
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<td>March 31, 2020</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1, 2020</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Location TBD</td>
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Attention Nurses in ED, OR and PACU!

We are seeking motivated nurses to represent your department on our staffing committee. This committee meets at least quarterly to ensure staffing plans meet the requirements of the law.

Staffing committee nurse representatives are paid for meeting time. The hospital is required to release staffing committee reps from the floor so they can attend the meetings.

ONA staff provide educational support, including online training. We also have vacancies for alternate positions in CCU, CVOR/Cardio Cath Lab, MCU, PACU, PCU, OR, SCU, and SSU/Endo/PAT. Alternates represent their unit when the primary is unable to attend. At that time, they have full voting rights and are paid for attending the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019.

If you know someone who is interested, please contact our ONA Labor Representative Gary Aguiar at 503-444-0690 or Aguiar@OregonRN.org.
Meet Your New ONA Nurse Practice Consultant

Jesse Kennedy, RN
J.Kennedy@OregonRN.org

Jesse Kennedy recently joined the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) in the role of nurse practice consultant (NPC). ONA’s NPCs are registered nurses who provide support for staffing committees as well as advice and education on the Oregon Nurse Staffing Law and Oregon Nurse Practice Act. They also offer continuing education to ONA members through OCEAN and other venues such as convention. In addition, NPCs offer board and committee development education and serve on various state boards related to nurses as ONA representatives. They are a great resource for questions regarding nurse practice as well as the ins and outs of the nurse staffing law. In addition to a number of other ONA bargaining units, Jesse is assigned to Peace Health facilities in Lane and Lincoln counties.

Jesse has been involved with ONA since nursing school. His ventures in professional development have led him to serve as President of the Lane Community College Student Nurses Association, President of the National Student Nurses Association, and Director-at-Large of the American Nurses Association. He has been directly involved in national initiatives focused on acceleration of practice initiatives for student nurses and empowering nurses to reach the pinnacle of their practice. Jesse’s role includes professional development outreach, education content development, and empowering our nurse staffing committees to build the best working environment possible.

Jesse is proud not only to be a native Oregonian but also a native Eugenian born at the University District Hospital when it was still the only Sacred Heart hospital in the area.

Know Your Rights

Workshops in Eugene/Springfield

We encourage every ONA member to understand their rights as a worker, how to build nurse power, ONA member benefits, disciplinary procedures, and grievances.

These workshops qualify you to become an ONA Steward. However, there is no obligation to sign up as a steward. Just come and learn how we operate.

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<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
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<td>November 23</td>
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Register at least a week in advance: oregonrn.org/page/knowyourrights

Constituent Association 5 Annual Fall Dinner

Please join us at dinner with your Lane County ONA colleagues to discuss updates affecting CA 5, ONA and health care.

November 7, 2019
Valley River Inn, 1000 Valley River Way, Eugene
6 p.m. - no host bar
6:30 p.m. - dinner
7-9 p.m. - CA 5 updates
RSVP to Attend via text or call Tyna Gormley at 541.914.7988

Watch for call for nominations from ONA Constituent Association Five (CA 5, Lane County ONA members) coming soon!