Nurse leaders discuss acuity tool and breaks, develop action steps.

Our two staffing teach-ins last week drew nurse leaders together to share ideas about safe staffing in several departments, including Emergency, Medical Care, Critical Decision, Progressive Care, and Surgical Care. Together, we recognized a great need to educate each other about staffing concerns on other units.

Our group decided to prioritize training other nurses to:

♦ Develop an acuity tool for each unit that reflects each individual unit’s patient population.

♦ Ensure every nurse gets all their meals and breaks every shift.

♦ Understand federal prohibitions on employer retaliation against nurses who speak up on working conditions.

We also collected action steps to unify nurses to support safe staffing. Click Here to read more or visit oregonrn.org/70 and follow the link for "Actions you can take to support safe staffing." Our nurse leaders agreed that dedicated break nurses are the best way for some units to ensure adequate staffing to cover meals and breaks. Moreover, nurses reject the employer’s notion that the only way the employer can afford dedicated break nurses is by cutting other support staff like CNAs and technicians.

Nurse administrators must realize that the budgets provided by Quorum Health...
Watch for call for nominations from ONA Constituent Association Five (CA-5, Lane County ONA members) coming soon!

Break Nurses at Tuality

Nurse leaders attending the teach-ins heard about the success of ONA nurses at Tuality Community Hospital (TCH). At TCH, a nonprofit that operates hospitals in Hillsboro and Forest Grove, ONA’s negotiators successfully bargained for break nurses in their contract that began on Feb. 12, 2018. In their pre-bargaining survey, only 21 percent of Tuality nurses reported they consistently take uninterrupted rest breaks. In March 2019 — after a full year with break nurses in their contract — 92 percent of respondents said they were consistently able to take uninterrupted rest breaks. That is a 71 percent increase from before the contractual provision!

Tuality is similar in size to McKenzie-Willamette and a smaller profit in 2018, yet they provide dedicated break nurses! (See the accompanying table.) Click Here to read more or visit oregonrn.org/97 and follow link to the March 15, 2019 newsletter.

We hear similar success stories from other hospitals around the state. Both St. Charles in Redmond and Sky Lakes in Klamath Falls have also successfully introduced dedicated break nurses to ensure floor nurses get their breaks.

Surely McKenzie-Willamette, the most profitable major hospital in Oregon for six consecutive years as well as the most profitable hospital in QHC, can afford dedicated break nurses!

Break Nurses Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Center</th>
<th>Total Revenue (in millions)</th>
<th>Net Income (in millions)</th>
<th>Dedicated Break Nurses?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles – Redmond</td>
<td>$110</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuality</td>
<td>$199</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sky Lakes</td>
<td>$215</td>
<td>$17</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie-Willamette</td>
<td>$236</td>
<td>$37</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon Health Authority 2018 data

Best Practices

Acuity Tools Should:

♦ Measure both clinical acuity and patient intensity. Including language spoken, presence of families, and recognize some patients are “high maintenance” who use the call light frequently.

♦ Be quick and easy to complete.

♦ Be re-assessed every shift and possibly mid-shift if patient care needs to be changed.

♦ Produce a total acuity score for patient teams assigned to each nurse.

♦ Be included in staffing plans that also account for admissions, discharges and transfers.

Meals and Breaks:

♦ Oregon law and our contract requires the employer to provide meals and breaks, which are defined as uninterrupted time away from all patient care tasks. Evidence shows that breaks are necessary for top-quality patient care, because a rested nurse is a safe nurse.

♦ The Oregon State Board of Nursing has ruled that when a registered nurse is on a break, the patients are not the nurse’s responsibility, but the employer’s.

♦ Every nurse should document their breaks AFTER they received them. Signing up for breaks before the shift is fine, but that is not evidence that nurses actually received their breaks.

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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.

November 16 Saturday 9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Register at least a week in advance: oregonrn.org/page/knowyourrights

Thank You, SEIU!

Their successful bargaining campaign limits insurance premiums to 5%

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) had a tough bargaining round with our employer this summer. Only as our coworkers prepared for a strike did the employer agree to nearly all their proposals at the eleventh hour. SEIU won a 5 percent increase in insurance premiums, even though the employer had originally proposed a 21 percent increase.

SEIU forced our employer to limit the health insurance increase to a reasonable amount! Depending on the plan an employee chooses, the monthly rate will increase from a range of $2.36 for the Employee Only “Choice Plan” up to $25.84 for the Eligible Employee + Family “Premium Plan.” CLICK HERE to read more or visit oregonrn.org/70 and follow link “Q & A for 2020 Benefit Changes.”

Since we share the same healthcare insurance plan as SEIU, we will also see our premiums increase 5 percent for 2020. Our contract allows us to review the annual changes proposed by the employer to our benefits package. We have 30 days to assess. If we disagree, we can open up our entire contract for re-bargaining.

Our contract allows nurses to combine one 15-minute rest period with their half hour meal period for a 45-minute break (§8.12), and 10- and 12-hour nurses may combine two 15-minute rest periods into a second 30-minute meal period (§8.1.2, paragraph 2).

Federal law prohibits the employer from retaliating against workers who speak up to improve working conditions, including missed meals and breaks.

Next Executive Committee Meeting

Nov. 20, 2019
Wednesday 9:30 — 11:30 a.m.
Willamette Room, McKenzie Medical Office
(the building adjacent to the main hospital building).

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Our executive committee investigated the matter fully and we consulted with you. Our research showed that nationally, large employers experience increased healthcare costs of 5 – 6.5 percent.

We asked the employer why they choose to increase our premium by 5 percent. They reported that the overall costs for the medical and prescription drug plans selected by QHC are projected to increase by 9.5 percent in 2020. Since they increased the SEIU contribution rate by 5 percent, they decided to offer ONA the same rate of increase. We accepted their proposed benefit changes.

Thank You to Our SEIU Sisters and Brothers!

SAVE THE DATE!

ONA Convention and House of Delegates
May 18-19, 2020
Portland, OR

The convention's theme is "Rising Up Together" and will feature sessions on professional development, nursing practice and workplace issues, as well as topics critical to ONA's strategic plan including equity and inclusion.

Registration opens in late November

Oregon Nurses Make A Difference

Oregon Nurses Foundation was established in 1982 to advance the profession of nursing in Oregon. They raise funds to support three key areas: scholarships, workforce assistance and retention programs. ONF’s goal is to raise $100,000 this year so they can award larger scholarships in 2020. Visit www.OregonNursesFoundation.org for more information or to donate.