



McKenzie-Willamette nurses meet with ONA officers and staff at the CA-5 Fall Dinner at Valley River Inn on November 7. From left, ONA Chief of Staff Whitney Wong, MCW Staffing Committee Co-Chair AJ Grady, MCW SSU nurse Teresa Brown, ONA President Lynda Pond, EGW Cabinet Chair Kevyn Paul, Labor Rep Gary Aguiar.

## Preparing for Bargaining

In our meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 20, our Oregon Nurses Association (ONA)/McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center (MCW) executive committee began their preparations for bargaining. In a series of decisions, they laid a strong foundation to bargain a successor agreement to our current contract, which expires on Sept. 1, 2020.

Our ONA/MCW executive committee decided to keep our negotiation committee small, so we are nimble and can focus on upcoming issues quickly. Our three officers (Chair Curt Stupasky, Secretary-Treasurer Crow Bolt, and Director Candy Bigbee), who have been actively engaged in ONA activities for the past three years, decided to serve as our negotiators in the next bargaining round.

These three officers have worked hard to develop their skills to unify nurses. They are intimately familiar with our contract and our employer's efforts to undermine it. Each has an ethical moral compass, a strong sense of justice, and are dedicated to getting the greatest good for the greatest number.

They have been meeting monthly to administer our contract and grow our steward structure. Each officer has represented nurses in investigatory, disciplinary and other meetings. All three serve on their unit practice committees. We have deep experience in building solidarity campaigns which bring nurses together to speak with a single voice. These abilities are essential to a successful bargaining round.

Our ONA/MCW executive committee has been strongly supported by our stewards, who are the backbone of our organization. We currently have three dozen stewards, who serve as our front-line defense in our interactions with our employer. Together, our stewards and officers are preparing to engage our members in the bargaining process.

## CATs

### CATs Connect Members to Our Team

We anticipate most stewards and other nurse leaders will form a contract action team (CAT), which will activate other nurses to participate in bargaining. CATs are nurse leaders who serve as a communication liaison between our members and our negotiators.

Each CAT selects five to eight of their colleagues, typically from their same unit and shift. CATs regularly dialogue with their assignees on bargaining proposals, questioning them about their possible support for our proposals or opposition to employer's proposals. These conversations usually occur during breaks or over the phone.

Reports of these individual conversations are collected by a chief CAT, who summarizes them for our negotiators. It is essential that every unit have one or more CAT on every shift so we can hear from the entire house. If you know someone in your unit who would be a good CAT, please contact our officers or our labor rep. Early next year, we will be hosting CAT trainings.

### CONTRACT ACTION TEAM (CAT) MEMBERS:

- ◆ **Know** the workers in their areas.
- ◆ **Reach out** to each worker individually.
- ◆ Complete an **assessment** for each worker.
- ◆ Ask workers to **complete bargaining surveys** and turn them in.
- ◆ **Talk to workers** who are unsure about their role in or support for their union.
- ◆ **Report results** of assessments to chief CAT.
- ◆ Continue to have conversations with members throughout negotiations, **giving them updates** from the negotiations team, and sending information back to the team from the members.
- ◆ **Defuse negative energy** coming either from anti-union members or the employer.



## Survey Coming

Our negotiators are also preparing a survey of members. We anticipate the survey will be short, less than 25 questions, and can be completed in 10 minutes or less.

We need every nurse to show their support for our negotiating committee by completing the survey as soon as possible. A survey with a high response rate helps our team decide on the priorities and demonstrates our unity before the employer.

We expect to release the survey in February, and it will be open for several weeks. Please submit yours as soon as possible.

## Researching Proposals

Our negotiators are also actively researching bargaining proposals. We reviewed our binders from the last bargaining round, noting items we proposed that we did not get.

We also reviewed grievances over the last three years to highlight ambiguities or other discrepancies in our current contract. Now is the time to fix these problems.

We have been surveilling other contracts, in particular, recent victories by our colleagues in other ONA-represented facilities. Provisions in those contracts could make good proposals for ours.

We will conduct a thorough wage study, including differentials and

call pay. All nurses realize we are now in a severe nurse shortage. The shortage has been evident in deep rural areas for several years.

The nurse shortage has begun to affect Willamette Valley hospitals, where we see higher turnover and nurses changing jobs far more frequently.

If our employer does not offer competitive wages, we will increasingly see positions remain vacant for long periods of time, which means our departments will be perennially short-handed. Furthermore, high turnover means that experienced nurses spend more time precepting a revolving door of new hires, instead of caring for our patients.

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**Researching Proposals** *continued from p. 2*

Our employer must offer competitive wages to ensure safe patient care in all units. We know they can afford it! McKenzie-Willamette has been the most profitable, major hospital in Oregon for six consecutive years. We are the flagship for Quorum, making more money than any of their other facilities.

**Sept. 1, 2020**

Collective Bargaining Agreement  
with McKenzie-Willamette expires

# Important Dates

- ◆ Dec. 11, 2019, Staffing Committee at 3:00 p.m.
- ◆ Jan. 10, 2020, Executive Committee from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
- ◆ Feb. 7, 2020, Executive Committee from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
- ◆ March 9, 2020, Executive Committee from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- ◆ March 31, 2020, Executive Committee from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- ◆ May 1, 2020, Executive Committee from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## Executive Committee

**PRESIDENT:**

Curtis Stupasky, RN  
SCU

**SECRETARY/ TREASURER:**

Jeffrey Crow Bolt, RN  
ED

**MEMBER:**

Ruth Candy Bigbee, RN  
WHBCC

**ONA Labor  
Representative:**

Gary Aguiar  
503-444-0690  
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# 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 is open at [oregonrn.org/events](https://oregonrn.org/events)



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](https://www.OregonNursesFoundation.org) for more information or to donate.