Nurses Ask CEO, HR To Eliminate Two-Tier Step Placement

81% Sign Petition, 50 Attend Unity Break

We have been losing experienced nurses for many months at McKenzie Willamette Medical Center. We have repeatedly asked the employer to do the right thing – place nurses at their proper step based on years of experience. The employer has repetitively refused our requests.

We finally got the employer’s attention when nearly 50 nurses attended a Unity Break on Friday, June 3. In a petition signed by 81 percent of ONA nurses, we asked the CEO to comply with our request.

The 50 nurses marched from the main lobby to the administrative wing and presented HR with our petition and a cover letter. To review the letter go to www.OregonRN.org/MCW.

We asked them to reply to our request by June 17, 2022. The Step Placement Committee will meet to assess the employer’s response and discuss our next action. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jennie Brown or our labor rep Gary, (503) 444-0690, Aguiar@OregonRN.org.

From left, Crow Bolt (ED), Clarissa Varihue (CCU), and Jennie Brown (Endo) have led a group of nurses advocating for nurses to be placed on their proper step, based on years of experience.
Our leaders hear your concerns about dangerous staffing in recent months. Thank you to the many nurses who have filed SRDFs, which are sent to the CNO and the Staffing Committee. The SRDFs volume has exploded; some situations speak to questionable decisions by management about acuity and assignments.

We want to cooperate with the employer to address these issues. ONA is assembling a committee of nurses from inpatient units and emergency services to address staffing concerns. Our leaders are collecting ideas to bring to the Staffing Committee. If you are interested, please contact Kate Morris (PCU) or Gary Aguiar, our labor rep, 503-444-0690, Aguiar@OregonRN.org.

Separately, we recently administered elections for the Staffing Committee, which began with nurses self-nominating for those positions. We will announce those results in a separate message.

Beginning July 1, three departments will have no representatives on the Staffing Committee: Main OR/CVOR, PACU, and SCU. These units are without a vote or voice over their own and other units’ staffing plans. To fill these vacancies, our election procedure allows the first nurse who self-nominates to become the primary and the second self-nominated nurse will be the alternate.

Further, several units are without alternate reps:
- Cardo Cath Lab/CVPR
- PCU
- Wound Care
- WHBCC

If you know anyone interested, please have them contact Gary at 503-444-0690, Aguiar@OregonRN.org.
Know Your Rights!

Steward Training July 9 & 16 in Eugene

Over the course of the pandemic, many nurses have left employment with McKenzie Willamette, including many stewards. In 2020, we had 40 stewards; today, we have only 26 stewards. Stewards are the backbone of our organization; they are critical to building nurse power. Stewards are on the front line, answering questions, representing nurses in investigatory meetings, and assisting with grievances.

That group of 40 stewards won the ONA Outstanding Grievance Representation Award in 2020; first among more than fifty bargaining units statewide.

Learn more here: [MCW_NL_2020-10-01.pdf](#).

We need to increase our organizing capacity by replenishing our steward ranks. If you know someone interested in learning their rights and exploring whether they want to serve as a steward, please encourage them to register for one of our Steward Workshops in Eugene in person.

Come learn how to build nurse power, benefits and responsibilities of union workers, “Weingarten right” to representation, what should an investigatory meeting look like, disciplinary procedures, and when/how to file a grievance.

This workshop arms you to become an ONA steward. However, there is no obligation to sign up as a steward. Just come and learn how to build nurse power!

Both workshops are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 9 and Saturday, July 16.

Register one week in advance for either date by emailing Aguiar@OregonRN.org.

Jennie Brown (Endo), on left behind Gary Aguiar, our labor rep, speaks to nurses at our Step Placement Unity Break.

Nearly 50 nurses attended our Unity Break to support experienced nurses who occupy a lower step than less experienced recent hires.
Wage Increase

Included in your first paycheck in June is an annual cost of living increase of 3.0 percent, which we won in negotiations last year. We all recognize that inflation has jumped substantially in the last few months.

Nonetheless, we remember that nurses won that increase with a strong bargaining campaign in 2020 and 2021. Our goal was to reach pay parity with Sacred Heart Medical Center. We succeeded in the goal, because 51 percent of McKenzie-Willamette nurses participated in at least one job action to support our negotiators.

In particular, nearly 200 nurses attended a bargaining session via Zoom. Further, more than 100 nurses attended our membership rally in the Springfield Lutheran Church parking lot, across the street from the hospital, on April 10, 2021.

Our bargaining team volunteered 365 hours of their own time to develop and research proposals, meet and listen to members, and negotiate with the employer and later a federal mediator. To defray some of those hours, 48 nurses donated 197 PTO hours.

Our bargaining team of Curt Stupasky, Crow Bolt, and Candy Bigbee began planning for our bargaining campaign in Summer 2020. Our first negotiation session was January 13, 2021, and our bargaining unit ratified the contract on May 28, 2021. 97 percent of ONA nurses voted “YES” to ratify.

**We won these financial changes:**

Among many other improvements in working conditions:

- An initial across the board wage increase of 3.25%, with successive annual increases of 3.0%
- Eight- and ten-hour shifts wage increase by 1.4%
- A new float pool differential of $2.00 per hour
- Increased standby pay to $5.25 per hour and $7.875 on holidays
- Increased BSN differential to 3%
- Increased certification differential to $2.00 per hour
- A new, separate $2.00 per hour bilingual skills differential
- Reduced the gap to single year steps between 6 – 7 and 7 – 8.

See a summary here: [MCW_TA-Reached_2021-05-11.pdf](#)

From left, Connie May (Preadmission Testing), Raelynn Radich (WHBCC), and Hydee Oehler (Preadmission Testing) collectively have 106 years of nursing experience at McKenzie-Willamette. They attended our Unity Break and support proper step placement for all nurses!