Bargaining Survey Opens!

Our initial pre-bargaining survey is now open. We need your input and ideas!

The survey asks for possible proposals, including specific provisions and language, if possible.

We also need your participation in the many tasks associated with bargaining. The survey offers opportunities to serve on our contract action team, professional nursing care committee, and in many other ways.

Please encourage others to complete the survey before it closes Friday, Oct. 20.

Preparing for Bargaining

An instructor from the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon will train our team on October 11.

Our team will then meet on October 23 to begin making decisions, including internal ground rules, roles, and proposal assignments.

Continued on page 2
We will discuss what kind of external ground rules with the employer and a request for information.

We must present a united front to the employer. Nurses speak with one voice. We show our solidarity in job actions that are visible to the employer. We are looking to engage even more nurses than the 2021 round. [See article on page 3 of this newsletter]

This newsletter features the second article in our three-party series to prime us for bargaining. See part one here in our last newsletter: 2023-08-14_mcw_nl.pdf (ymaws.com)

At the negotiation table, proposals are presented in a redline format, where the red words are proposed changes to the existing language. Underlined words are proposed insertions and words struck through are proposed deletions.

Federal law prohibits both sides from “regressive” or backwards bargaining. Regressive bargaining occurs when one side offers a proposal that asks for more than their initial original proposal. Since it has the effect of moving the parties further from an agreement, it is illegal. When one side offers a regressive proposal, the other party may file a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, the federal agency charged with enforcing the law.

Each proposal is responded to by the other party, where they can accept, reject, or offer counter proposals. Counterproposals can continue back and forth until both sides agree on specific language. “Good faith" bargaining does not require either side to move off their original proposal.

When one party accepts the other side’s proposal, it is often called a Tentative Agreement (or TA). A TA means that both sides agree to particular language for a provision. The TA-ed language will appear in the final redline to be presented for ratification.

Supposals are informal presentations, which ask, “if we proposed such-and-such, how would you respond?” It allows the parties to think creatively without being subject to regressive bargaining.

Next up: Watch for bargaining primer—part three on late-stage bargaining.
In 2021, we held seven bargaining sessions and three mediation sessions with the employer. We reached a final agreement that brought nearly every nurse to wage parity with Sacred Heart nurses.

- We received a 3.25% across the board wage increase in the first full pay period after ratification, 3.0% in first full pay period after June 1, 2022, and 3.0%, in first full payroll period after June 1, 2023.
- We increased standby base rate to $5.25/hour and holiday rate of $7.875/hour, best in our region, possibly statewide.
- We accepted the employer’s proposal to consolidate eight- and ten-hour wage scale into our 12-hour wage scale over the course of the three-year contract. 1.4% increase at ratification, 1.4% in first full pay period after June 1, 2022, and complete consolidation in first full pay period after June 1, 2023.
- Float pool nurses got a raise of $2/hour.
- Reduced gap to single year steps between steps 6 – 7 and steps 7 – 8.
- For the first time in our contract, we will earn 70% wage replacement when we are low censused 75% below our FTE. To get the low census wage replacement, we accepted the employer’s proposal that whenever we call in sick, we must use PTO.

We won these improvements because McKenzie-Willamette nurses increased their participation in ONA activities. In November 2019, we assessed that only 18% of our bargaining unit had participated in an ONA job action. In the 2021 bargaining round, 51% of nurses joined in at least one job action, nearly tripling our participation rate.

Our negotiators were Curt Stupasky (Chair), Crow Bolt (Secretary-Treasurer) and Candy Bigbee. Our field team included Stephen Smith, Tiffeny Jennings, DeLaina Shahan, Stacey St. Germain, Candice Basile, Jennifer Cave, Ryan Young, Misty Avalos, Tara Buhr, Laura Polanco, Karissa Rea, Teresa Brown, Will Bennett, Kevin Drew, Rene Riley, Maggie DeKalb, Chris Olsen, Tish Ericson, and Bonnie Chase.

The team leafletted, rounded, called, texted, and had conversations with hundreds of nurses. These interactions produced the highest member participation rate in decades, which moved the employer.

As a result of these efforts, we made substantial gains in our contract. For example, these four changes were the best language in any ONA contract:

Continued on page 4
Very strong shared governance, including increased transparency and democracy to empower in staffing committee and unit practice committees.

Vacancies filled by most senior qualified nurse, which eliminates loopholes for managers to hire favorites.

Certification differential increase to $2/hour, from previous $1/hour.

ONA education funds and hours determined by formula, tied to number of nurses in bargaining unit, effectively automatic annual increases.

We also won these provisions in our current contract:

- New bilingual skills certification $2/hour.
- Increase BSN differentials to 3% and MSN to 4%, from current 2%/3% respectively.
- Strengthened reorganization section, which increased notice to 30 days with master schedule announced before bidding. Bidding occurs by skill code.
- Nurses may be required to float to only one unit, instead of current two.
- Layoff and return language now apply to only those in our bargaining unit. Previously managers and unrepresented RNs could claim a position over an ONA nurse.

Christmas Eve night shift differential begins 1830 for that shift, instead of midnight to midnight, fixing a decades-old problem.

Gender neutral language throughout contract.

Grievance process revised to encourage informal resolution with lowest level supervisor, clarify deadlines, includes possible mediation.

Short stay allowed time off based on two shifts (am/pm), instead of one shift as previously.

PACU allowed 2 nurses off at one time, instead of one previously.

Improved new employer orientation process.

Nurse can now donate 10 PTO hours to bargaining team, up from five hours previously.

Our survey received the highest response ever, with 71% (281 of 395 nurses) completing our survey. A majority (54%) reported they would participate in an informational picket. Nurses reported solidarity by agreeing with this statement: “I WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET WAGE PARITY AND INCREASE STANDBY PAY.” Fifty-one percent scored themselves as seven or higher on this intensity scale!
Remember When? A Flashback to 2021 Bargaining
continued from page 4
Know Your Rights!

Steward Workshops
Mid-Valley in Person!

Learn how to support other nurses.

Topics include the “Weingarten right” to representation, what does an investigatory meeting look like, disciplinary procedures, and a brief introduction to grievances.

Register one week in advance by emailing aguiar@oregonrn.org

All workshops are 9 a.m. to noon

Saturday, October 14 - Albany
Saturday, October 21 - Eugene
Saturday, October 28 - Corvallis

These workshops arm you to become an ONA steward. However, there is no obligation to sign up as a steward. Just come and learn how to support other nurses!

RSVP one week in advance and we will notify you of the location of your workshop. For more information, text/call Gary Aguiar, 503-444-0690 or Aguiar@OregonRN.org