ONA Article on Black Lives Matter Not Intended for Our Bargaining Update

The article Black Lives Matter; Racism is a Public Health Crisis that was printed in our last bargaining update was an inadvertent addition to our bargaining update which local officers and members did not expect or appreciate. We understand that the article caused feelings of alienation at a time when unity among Mercy nurses is critical. ONA sincerely apologizes for the error of including this article in our bargaining update and appreciate the concern and feedback expressed by many members.

ONA has not engaged directly with any formal Black Lives Matter organization and understands the movement to be a grassroots effort with localized issues and not a structure or organization at all. Our ONA does not and has not financially contributed to any such organization if one exists.

At the last ONA House of Delegates, which was held in Bend in 2018, the member delegates adopted a resolution to champion Diversity, Equity and Inclusion which you can find by following this link or searching the main ONA webpage for “2018 Resolutions”. The resolution tasked ONA with finding “innovative ways to educate and motivate membership to act on racial equity issues both in their practice and in their everyday lives.” The article inadvertently printed in our bargaining update was published on the ONA website to follow the directive adopted through this resolution. This work is in its beginning stages and we are all learning together as we move toward racial equity in the nursing profession and healthcare institutions.

The latest iteration of the Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter, is pushing all of us to examine how we have conversations to equalize the field when it comes to the health care that we provide, how health care is funded and how we bring diversity into our union. How we communicate should and will be informed by feedback from members.

ONA is pleased that Mercy nurse leaders and staff from our union will have an opportunity to continue talking through and learning how we can more effectively engage members in this critically important work without alienating or offending them in the process. To that end, ONA staff commits to continuing the conversation, including hearing concerns from our members so that our union can become a better, more inclusive organization.

Please feel free to contact Courtney Niebel, ONA labor representative (niebel@oregonrn.org) or Matt Calzia, ONA nurse practice consultant (calzia@oregonrn.org) with questions or concerns.
Our ONA/Mercy Nurses United (MNU) bargaining team has met with Mercy management twice since our last bargaining update. We continued negotiations on July 8 & 15 with partial-day sessions. We will not be meeting with management Wednesday, July 22 in order to allow time for our supplemental survey results as well as time for a Q&A session with the entire bargaining unit (Conf. Rm. A 0930-1700). During the last two sessions, several proposals have been exchanged two/three minor tentative agreements were made, as described below.

Proposals Exchanged on July 8 & 15

- Mercy proposed additional language under Article 3.7: Casual Part Time which would require CPT nurses to fulfill minimum requirements for the shift they were hired to work on.

- Mercy responded to the ONA proposal for new language in section 3.7.3 which would allow CPT nurses working an average of at least twenty-four (24) hours or more per week during the preceding quarter to petition for a regular part-time or full-time position be posted. Mercy’s response would require CPT to work an average of at least twenty-four (24) hours or more per week during the preceding six months and would not consider hours CPT were covering for vacations and “short fluctuations in volume”. The hospital’s response would also allow the hospital to determine whether they will post a position if petitioned by a CPT nurse to do so while the language ONA proposed would mandate the hospital post a position if the average hours worked was met, minus hours CPT worked to cover a leave of absence.

- Mercy responded to ONA’s proposal for additional language in new section 4.4: Bullying and Incivility. The hospital rejected our proposal that would require a joint investigation into any allegations of bullying and incivility reported by nurses.

- Mercy proposed changes to the Home Health Appendix C which would change mileage calculations to be in-line with IRS definitions (excluding miles from home to office) and add “Hospice” to the title and references throughout.

- ONA proposed updated new language in new section 16.7.5: Unit Staffing Plan Development which would require a vote of the majority of staff nurses on the unit to ratify the UBC’s proposed staffing plan for the unit.

- ONA proposed updated new language in new section 16.7.6: Unit Meal & Break Plan Development which would require a vote of the majority of staff nurses on the unit to ratify the UBC’s proposed meal & break plan for the unit.

- Mercy provided a counter-proposal to Article 16 – rejecting our request to have SRDF’s available on the hospital intranet, they say they do not have the capability to implement an online form, accepting our proposal that Staffing Council receive annual training, and rejecting our proposed language that UBC’s develop unit staffing plans and meal & break plans for their unit as they believe this is a sole function of the Staffing Council.

- We spent time discussing Mercy’s desire to implement a flu vaccination or mask policy. We provided feedback that the policy needs to protect privacy rights of nurses and be based on common-sense best practices for when a mask would need to be worn. They are taking our feedback to Infection Control to adjust the draft policy.

One Tentative Agreement Reached July 8 & 15

- We agreed to move language from 12.2.2: Charge Nurse Vacancies which provided a definition of Relief Charge into Article 3.2 Charge Nurse to include it in the section on Employee Definitions.
ONA Legislative Issues Member Survey

We invite all members to participate in ONA’s legislative issues survey. The survey questions have emerged through a collaborative effort between members and staff and are focused on issues that advance nursing practice, health equity, and workplace safety.

This work was a direct result of the ONA Post-COVID-19 Legislative Planning Series, utilizing member experiences and feedback to move forward in developing a legislative agenda. To ensure we have as many voices represented as possible, the group decided to solicit feedback from all membership through this survey.

Your input helps ONA Government Relations staff and the Cabinet on Health Policy finalize an agenda that ONA will prioritize during the 2021 State Legislative Session.

Participants will be eligible to receive an ONA-branded facemask so you can show your nurse pride and promote public health while out in public.

To complete the survey, visit:
www.OregonRN.org/Planning

ONA COVID-19 Resource Center

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA is dedicated to keeping nurses and our communities safe. One key aspect of this work is providing up-to-date information and guidelines related to COVID-19.

Declining an Unsafe Assignment

ONA has issued guidance to our members on declining unsafe assignments for COVID-19 patients when lack of PPE, safe staffing levels, or breakdown of triage protocols put your health at risk.

Share Your COVID-19 Stories

We invite everyone to share your stories about how COVID-19 has impacted your practice, your workplace and your life. Your stories will help educate officials, elected leaders, the media, and the general public about what is really happening in our health care system.

Share your stories today to help in the advocacy efforts as we push for safer conditions for nurses, health care workers and patients!

To learn more about all of these issues and to stay up to date on the work being done and to take the COVID-19 Workplace survey, visit:
www.OregonRN.org/coronavirus
Join the MNU-ONA Facebook Page to Stay Informed!

Throughout negotiations we will use the Mercy Nurses United (MNU)-ONA Facebook page to post real-time information about what is happening at the bargaining table, ask for input on your experiences to better inform our negotiating team and seek your advice on how to respond to specific proposals.

To make sure that you stay involved throughout bargaining find the “MNU-ONA” Group on Facebook and request to join today! We will verify that you are an ONA member at Mercy and approve the request.

We currently have 131 nurses in the group but we would like to see everyone join during negotiations!

The Contract Action Team (CAT) Wants You!

We are seeking nurses from every unit and every shift to join the MNU-ONA Contract Action Team (CAT).

The CAT will be responsible for ensuring a flow of communication to and from the bargaining team throughout negotiations.

It is a minimal time commitment and the position is only active during negotiations. Support your bargaining team and coworkers by joining the CAT today!

To volunteer, please contact Courtney Niebel at Niebel@OregonRN.org.

ONA Virtual House of Delegates

To ensure the health and safety of our members through the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA made the decision to hold the ONA House of Delegates virtually on Sept. 22, 2020.

Elected ONA delegates must re-register by July 31 to participate in the HOD.

Click here to learn more and register today or go to www.oregonrn.org/events