Executive Committee
Co-Chair: Trish Hayes (Staff Development)
Grievance Chair: Su Mellor (ED)
Secretary: Bridget Lovelace (Day Surgery)
Treasurer: vacant
Membership Chair: Trish Hayes (Staff Development)

Grateful for You

Your community is grateful for your incredible hard work and sacrifice. Southern Oregon local community group, WECARE, has been gathering donations and offering support to health care workers. Recently donations of chocolate, protein bars and Starbucks mochas were donated to Mercy Medical Center in partnership with ONA. Know that the community and ONA is behind you in this extremely difficult and unprecedented time.

Mandatory Vaccine Rule

Mandatory vaccination rule imposed by Governor Brown and implementation by Mercy Medical Center. Employers are obligated to follow the mandatory vaccination rule by law. Employers are required to reasonably accommodate valid medical (disability) and religious exemption requests unless it creates an undue burden on the employer. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and who have not been granted a medical or religious exception, will not be allowed to work in those specified workforce areas including health care. The process for requesting an exception is to complete the electronic survey from Common Spirit.

The accommodation process itself is statutory in nature and must be completed for nurses on an individual basis. The employer’s obligations to provide an accommodation comes from Federal and State law, not the ONA contract.

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Mandatory Vaccine Rule (Continued)

However, our contract does provide that ONA will discuss what is considered a reasonable accommodation with the employer and the affected RN. Therefore, ONA will attend accommodation meetings to discuss accommodation options with the nurse and the employer when the accommodation implicates contract provisions. We believe that masking and testing of unvaccinated nurses is generally a reasonable accommodation that employer’s should allow, but each facility and unit is different.

Our ability to negotiate the impact of the mandate as a change in working conditions is governed by Federal law and we believe the employer is obligated to bargain over implementation of this mandate, even though specific accommodations are arrived at between the nurse and the hospital. We have met with administration and they have shared their intent to allow accommodations. We have requested to meet again to clarify the result of accommodations when the accommodations expire. If and/or when actions are taken against staff that violate our contract, we have the right to file a grievance and follow that path per the collective bargaining agreement. Accommodations being offered around the state vary widely, from no accommodation, to leaves of absence with or without pay, to being allowed to work with additional PPE requirements and temperature checks throughout the shift. Our most recent conversation with the administration provided the same information you have been provided thus far. We have asked to meet and discuss the full details as well as to share our concerns related to the accommodations themselves. There has been no further information provided by Common Spirit at this time.

Oregon AFL-CIO’s Workforce Program

If you are not going to vaccinate or file for an exemption I recommend speaking with Josh Hall, our workforce board liaison who is dedicated to helping all unionized workers with separation from work.

Our State Labor Liaison will assist with: worker separation activities and unemployment insurance. contact: Josh Hall, Oregon AFL-CIO Workforce Liaison (541) 990-3518, Josh@oraflcio.org

Executive Team Openings

There are two officer openings on the ONA Mercy Executive Team: Vice Chair and Treasurer. Unions are as strong as their members!

If you are interested in being more engaged please reach out to Patrice Hayes (current chair) or Misha Hernandez your Labor Representative, Hernandez@OregonRN.org.

Topics and Dates

Introductory Steward Training
- Saturday, October 16, 2021
- Wednesday, November 17, 2021
- Thursday, December 9, 2021

Grievance Handling Training
- Saturday, October 9, 2021

Building Worksite Power Training
- Wednesday, November 10, 2021