We met with the County for our eighth bargaining session on, February 24. We strived to reach a tentative agreement on at least one of our proposals but unfortunately that did not occur. The County has still not provided an economic proposal even though we have been bargaining since October 2021. The County informed us that it is due to them needing to respond to a very tight labor market. It is not easy for them to predict what the cost of living and the labor market situation is going to be for the full term of the contract. We made three counterproposals on: reviewing the employee churn rate, changing positions, and replacing employees on leave.

On reviewing the employee churn (turnover) rate, we are pretty close to an agreement. There was disagreement about where this language belongs in the contract. They responded with it being in Article 5. They added language about providing this information to the County so that we can reduce County turnover.

On changing positions, we cleaned up the language they proposed about there being trial service periods for employees to move to a new classification or new position. We reduced the proposed 120-day trial service period to three months for workers changing positions. We agreed with them on the 6-month trial service period for workers moving to a new classification. We removed the language about not being able to file a grievance and some of the other management rights related language. On replacing employees on leaves of 90 days or greater, we added equity language in relation to distributing hours equitably.

The County made three counterproposals as well. They responded to our employee churn rate proposal (described above). our professional development proposal and our previous medical experience proposal.

continued on page 2
On professional development, they mostly agreed with our proposal for CHNs and LPNs to attend a conference annually. They did not respond to our tuition reimbursement proposal. On in-service classes, they responded to our detailed list for nursing specific courses with vague language. On licensing fees, they responded to our proposed reimbursement for CEUs required for renewing our OSBN license with allowing employees to complete the training on County paid time.

On previous medical experience, they proposed a lengthy fellowship pilot program for registered nurses with ADN degrees but without the required amount of professional experience. The purpose is diversifying our nursing workforce, which both parties are committed to. These nurses would enter a training program that could last up to two years depending on experience. They are proposing that nurses with less than 1 year of experience enter at stage 1 and nurses with more than 1 year but less than 2 years enter stage 2. Stage 1 nurses would make 6% less than the first step of the CHN wage scale, Stage 2 nurses will make 3% less than the first step of the CHN wage scale. The fellowship nurses would be assigned CHN preceptors. While we appreciate the movement on this issue, their proposal did not capture all of our proposed language. Our proposal included honoring other medical experience, such as a CMA/ CNA, paramedic, EMT, LPN/LVN in lieu of the required two years of RN level experience.

We bargain next on March 10, 2022 from 9 am to 4 pm. Please come observe virtually. You can even drop in during your break. When we have observers, we tend to get closer to making agreements. Please reach out to one of our union officers or labor rep for further details.

Have you become a member yet?
One of the easiest ways to show our solidarity for a good contract is having high union membership numbers. This is especially important in our unit as we have nurses and PAs spread out throughout the county. Please take a moment to join today! Scan the QR code below or go to: [http://www.oregonrn.org/Apply](http://www.oregonrn.org/Apply)