Coronavirus Preparedness

Your ONA executive committee is working with the County to ensure that good protocols are in place and that the county is clearly communicating their plans to frontline staff to deal with this outbreak. Your executive team is also in active discussions with the county to mitigate the impact on nurses who are sent home from work due to exposure to coronavirus.

Click here to complete a short survey about how your workplace is handling COVID-19 preparation and training.

To report a violation of Coronavirus protocol in your facility, please email practice@oregonrn.org with as many details as possible while being mindful of HIPAA guidelines.

Multnomah County Commissioners

MCDC, and about our concerns with the budget overall. Nurses very clearly shared with the Commissioners the fact that nursing positions in the County cannot be cut further without real impacts to the patients we serve.

Primary elections for Multnomah County Commissioners are coming up in May of this year. Stay tuned for information about ONA endorsements in these races.

ONA Nurses Meet with Multnomah County Commissioners

On March 5, nurses from Multnomah County and Unity Center for Behavioral Health had the opportunity to meet with Multnomah County Commissioners Jessica Vega-Pederson, Sharon Meirian, and Lori Stegman. The Commissioners, all of whom are seeking reelection, shared their priorities for the coming term, which included things like improving access to early childhood education, criminal justice reform, and tackling the state’s mental health crisis. Nurses used the opportunity to talk to the Commissioners about our deep concerns about staffing in Primary Care Clinics and Corrections, about safety and the overuse of mandated shifts at Inverness and

Committee Retreat

ONA/MCHD Executive Committee Retreat

In January, the ONA/MCHD Executive Committee met a Saturday Evening to discuss plans for strengthening our union, improving communication, and getting ready for bargaining in 2021. To stay consistent with our Union’s bylaws, the following appointments were made:

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Michelle Chau, Executive Committee Chair, NERC Chair
Joanne Buck, Executive Committee Vice Chair
Emily Marx, Secretary
Alex Fortune, Treasurer
Evangeline Nichols, Membership Chair
Claire Contreras, Grievance Chair

We made plans for revitalizing our union’s committees, including the Grievance Committee and the Membership Committee. We also discussed holding steward trainings and a union-wide community building events later this year. Stay tuned for more details, including dates and locations.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Membership Committee and being a point-person for communication in your work site, contact Evangeline Nichols, Membership Committee Chair. If you are interested in becoming a steward for your program, please contact Claire Contreras, Grievance Chair.

Your ONA/MCHD executive committee meets the second Monday of every month at 6 pm. These meetings are open to every ONA member at Multnomah County. If you are interested in attending, please contact Aaron Giesa to rsvp (giesa@oregonrn.org).

Summary the ONA/MCHD Executive Team’s Recent Work

Some nurses have asked, “what is the ONC/MCHD Executive Team working on?” Below is a short summary of the projects that are ongoing or recently completed.

Ongoing support to members:
- Minimizing layoffs and protecting programs when there are budget cuts
- Expanding health benefits or minimizing cuts
- Supporting members in the grievance process
- Supporting members facing disciplinary action
- Rebuilding Membership and Grievance Committees

Issues currently in progress:

Workday
- Working towards clearer payslips
- Improving the process for addressing Workday issues
- Adding time codes so employees can code their time correctly
- Fixed! - problems with holiday accrual and use
- Fixed! - privacy concerns regarding sensitive employee being displayed to anyone with Workday access
- Participation in a class action lawsuit to address Workday issues

Non-Workday
- Ensuring nurses are on the correct step following the 1/1/19 market adjustment now that new contract language protects them from being moved below new hire criteria

2018-2021 Contract highlights
- Better compensation in the form of annual COLAs, increased Corrections Health premium, expanding preceptor pay, better comparables for market adjustments, and new language that ensures when market adjustments are implemented nurses won’t be moved to a step lower than new hire criteria indicates
- Staffing/workload improvements with a pilot program capping the number of NP/PA appointment slots, requiring 3 hours notice be given to nurses for mandatory OT
- Time off - increased vacation accrual for new hires, flexible holiday to be used anytime during the year
- Expanded tuition reimbursement
- Minimizing changes to health benefits

See the Multnomah County ONA Bargaining Unit newsletter from November 15, 2018 for more details.
Your ONA/MCHD Executive Committee Officers

1. Tell us your name, position at the county, where you work and how long you have worked in that position.

My name is Claire Contreras. I am a Community Health Nurse at the HIV Health Services Center downtown. I have worked with Multnomah County for 21 months, 2 years in May! I have been a nurse for 4 and a half years and prior to this have worked extensively in community health, harm reduction, and HIV prevention. I have also worked in the inpatient setting and hold an MSN in public health nursing.

2. Tell us something you like about your job or County employment.

I love my job! I feel passionate about and moved to serve the patient population we work with at HHSC. I love the way we care for our patients with a multidisciplinary and trauma informed approach that is mindful, holistic, accountable and de-stigmatizing. I value our clinic’s shared understanding of the social determinants of health, and the way we support each other through stressful and unpredictable situations.

3. Tell us something you hope to change at the County or want to change in the contract.

More competitive benefits so that county wide we are able to retain strong and passionate nurses.

4. Tell us why you think unions are important.

The first 2 and half years of my nursing career were in Austin, Texas where nurses are entirely without unions. I was blown away when I moved to the Northwest by all the resources that are available to nurses, the livable wages they are paid and the competitive benefits they are offered. Comparing my experience working as a nurse in a setting without unions to one now with unions I have realized how important they are to a high quality and rewarding work experience, and in turn how important it is to maintain and nourish their presence and power.

Claire Contreras, ONA/MCHD Grievance Chair

Alex Fortune, MCHD ONA Treasurer

1. Tell us your name, position at the county, where you work and how long you have worked in that position.

Hello! I’m Alex Fortune. For the past 2.5 years I’ve worked as a CHN at East County Health Center.

2. Tell us something you like about your job or County employment.

The mission of the County and the clients that we serve make me feel like I am doing meaningful and necessary work.

3. Tell us something you hope to change at the County or want to change in the contract.

I hope to improve staff retention. The turnover rate for NPs at the County is especially worrisome.

4. Tell us why you think unions are important.

In such a large organization like the County, it is important to have a voice that is united and heard in order to promote practical solutions, understanding, and transparency.

Claire Contreras, ONA/MCHD Grievance Chair

Alex Fortune, MCHD ONA Treasurer

The 2020 ONA Convention and House of Delegates will be held on Monday, May 18 (CE Day) and Tuesday, May 19 (House of Delegates) in Portland, OR.

The convention’s theme is “Rising Up Together” and will feature sessions on professional development, nursing practice and workplace issues, as well as topics critical to ONA’s strategic plan including equity and inclusion. Registration is open through May 1, 2020.

www.OregonRN.org
As more cases of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) are reported and confirmed, ONA will continue working relentlessly to do the work needed to keep nurses and our communities safe. We have received reports from frontline ONA members of suspected Coronavirus cases in at least three additional facilities, which have not yet been confirmed. We have also heard disturbing instances of appropriate practice protocol not being followed by hospital administrators in multiple facilities across the state, and in Washington.

Incidents ONA members have observed firsthand include failure to mask patients with Coronavirus-like symptoms during triage, failure to supply adequate fitted N95 masks to nurses caring for patients with potential cases, and failure to maintain proper quarantine of the family and healthcare provider team of suspected Coronavirus patients.

These breaches of practice standard put us as nurses directly at risk.

ONA has worked diligently through the weekend to implement a Coronavirus response that will keep our members, patients, and communities safe. This has included:

- ONA staff traveling the state to observe protocol to facilities with suspected cases
- ONA conducting an information request to all 50+ ONA facilities to gather information on management’s plans for protecting members and enforcing practice protocols
- ONA engaging with the governor’s office around the need for any furloughed or quarantined nurses to receive paid admin leave instead of being forced to drain earned paid sick leave banks
- ONA leadership sounding the alarm about the risk to our members this outbreak presents in published interviews with NBC Portland, the Oregonian, Willamette Weekly, and Pamplin Media Group
- ONA partnering with both ANA and AFT around a national response to the outbreak, spearheaded and driven by ONA leadership
- Partnering with the Washington State Nurses Association around a coordinated public message and response to the outbreak our two organizations are at the center of
- ONA coordinating with the Oregon Health Authority and a number of hospital employers in an ad hoc task force to manage Coronavirus response, containment, and resource management

To report a violation of Coronavirus protocol in your facility, please email practice@oregonrn.org with as many details as possible while being mindful of HIPAA guidelines.

ONA is also asking all members to take an ONA COVID-19 Workplace Survey to help better understand the work being done by facilities across the state

To stay up to date on the work being done and to take the COVID-19 Workplace survey, visit:

www.OregonRN.org/coronavirus