Peace Harbor Medical Center (PHMC)
Bargaining Update #6
Feb. 24, 2020

Administration’s Proposal on Compensation Lands Badly

Bargaining for the next Peace Harbor Medical Center (PHMC) Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) contract continued over the course of two days this past week. The two sides exchanged a number of proposals including on wages and professional development. The ONA team put forward a proposal on professional development that increases the level of funding from the current $20,000 to $40,000 with the amount an individual nurse could access increasing from the current $750 to $1200. These higher levels are meant to reflect both the increase in the size of the bargaining unit (growing from around 83 nurses to almost 100 over the past two years) and the increase in the cost of professional conferences. The ONA team put out a starting position on a wage increase of 5% over three years as well as a proposal to add tier 3 call pay for both surgical services and home health and hospice nurses and a new premium pay category of “6th and consecutive” that would provide time and a half for working more than 5 days in a row.

The Peace Harbor Administration team’s response to this initial wage and professional development proposal was more than disappointing. While their starting position on the increase to the wage scale was underwhelming at 1.5% over four years it was clearly meant to be a starting position. It was their Article 9 proposal on compensation tying their acceptance of the ONA team’s proposal to create a new “6th and consecutive” article to giving up the hard fought for tier 2 call pay for Surgical Services and as giving up double time that caused the ONA team genuine distress. The nurses were upset enough to consider ending the day early but instead decided it would be more productive to express their deep concern to the other team while also continuing to exchange proposals on other articles. No one on the current Administration bargaining team had been part of the 2016 negotiations so it seems they were unaware of how significant gaining the addition of the tier 2 call pay in that
contract was to the nurses. Their proposal to remove it in favor of “6th and Consecutive Pay” was provocative in a way they didn’t seem to understand until the ONA team shared with them how upset they were by the proposal. Their lead negotiator, ONA labor rep Claire Syrett, pointed out that the Administration is hoping to wrap up these negotiations in February with a four-year contract. Their proposal to take away these important premiums even in exchange for a new one really took the ONA team aback potentially setting back progress the teams have made. The one bright spot in this exchange was that the Administration’s team to acceptance the ONA’s team proposal to create a tier 3 call pay for Home Health and Hospice nurses who have been taking a large amount of call for the past two years.

In their counter to the Article 16 Professional Development proposal, the Administration offered just a $5,000 increase in professional development funds and only a $50 increase in the amount each nurse can access. This was viewed as inadequate by the ONA team given both the increase in nurses at the hospital and the ever-increasing cost of attending conferences. The proposal also sought to exclude the new per diem category that has been discussed at the table from being eligible for the funds.

The ONA team has not provided a formal counter proposal to the Article 9 or Article 16 proposals offered by Administration. Instead they chose to focus on seeking agreement on other articles in order to keep some momentum going in the process. As a result, the teams reached tentative agreements (TA) on two more article by the end of the second day of negotiations. The most significant of those was a new section in Article 22 Committees that will provide paid time for three nurses (including one from Home Health and Hospice) to participate on a new PHMC Workplace Violence Prevention Committee (WVPC) as well as joining the already established PeaceHealth Oregon Network WVPC that convenes at Riverbend. Nurses will be chosen by ONA and paid for their time in committee meetings as well as receiving an additional 60 minutes of paid time a quarter to prepare for meeting and work on related subcommittee. Other new provisions provide for two nurses (including one Home Health and Hospice nurse) to participate in a Health Benefits Review committee that convenes at Riverbend which includes ONA members as well as other represented employees. This committee provides input on benefits and makes recommendations to improve access to the various benefit programs offered by PeaceHealth. The new article includes a provision that PHMC shall provide technical support for remote participation on these two committees.

The other TA reached was on Article 7 Grievances. The parties agreed to set longer timelines for the grievance process as well as an additional option of using a mediations process prior to taking a grievance to arbitration. This can help nurses reach a satisfactory settlement in some case without having to go through the lengthy arbitration process. The TA also clarifies when stewards are entitled to paid release time to represent nurses in investigatory and grievance meetings.

The ONA team was glad to be able to reach these TAs before adjourning. The teams exchanged other proposals on Article 6 Grievances, Article 8 Hours of Work and Article 10 Paid Time Off. The teams are very close to reaching agreement on these articles. Still outstanding are proposals on Article 3 Employment Status, Article 14 Lay Off/Recall and Article 15 Health and Welfare. The teams will meet again for two consecutive days on Monday, Feb. 24 and Tuesday, Feb. 25 in Conference Room C with the intention of coming to a final agreement. However, they are looking to schedule two additional dates, most likely in mid-March, in case they are not able to finish their work in February.

Please come by on your break or lunch to sit in on the discussion. Your presence makes a huge difference. We are also asking the Operating Room nurses to try to come by after your shift on Monday, Feb. 24 so you can share with the administration’s team how the burden of being on call affects your work/life balance and how the tiered call pay helps to mitigate some of that burden. Your ONA team will continue to fight for the best possible contract for you. Adding your voice to this effort will help them achieve this win.
ONA team hard at work: Sandy Fleetwood, Ian Jarman, Starr Kearney, Toby Knight-Miegs, Lorie Roeser

Bring Your Voice to the ONA House of Delegates

Your voice matters. Be part of ONA’s primary governing body, the House of Delegates (HOD). As a delegate you will discuss and vote on resolutions, amendments and other initiatives that will determine ONA’s direction.

Bring your perspective and join us at the 2020 House of Delegates on May 19 in Portland.

Visit www.OregonRN.org/Delegate for more information and to complete your delegate nomination form.

Questions about statewide offices or delegates? Email or call ONA Chief of Staff Whitney Wong at Wong@OregonRN.org or 503-293-0011 ext. 1325.

NOMINATION DEADLINE EXTENDED TO FEB. 29!

To learn more and be a delegate, visit www.OregonRN.org/Delegate
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.

**Featured Topics**
- Keynote: Healthcare Equity
- Oregon’s Hospital Nurse Staffing Law
- Supporting Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
- Caring for the Queer Community
- How to Win Organizing and Contract Campaigns
- Importance of SANEs in Response to Sexual Assault
- Developing Cultural Humility
- and more!

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Participants of the CE day on Monday, May 18 will be able to earn up to 5.25 continuing nursing education contact hours.

Oregon Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

**Registration and Fees**

Registration is open through May 1, 2020.

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Register today at www.OregonRN.org