No Progress in Bargaining:
Employer Rebuffs our Best Efforts

PeaceHealth rejects our major proposals, delays responses to others; we continue to offer counter-proposals and trades.

In two days of bargaining with Peace Harbor Hospital (PHH) administration last week, our employer resisted our attempts to reach a new agreement. Thus, we saw little progress in moving forward on our key issues that will recruit and retain experience nurses: wages and benefits. Our employer has rejected outright our proposals on these topics. Moreover, they have offered few counter-proposals and have delayed their responses.

We Want to Hear from You!

- **MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
  Monday, Feb. 6, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Ichiban Restaurant, 1179 US Highway 101

- **MID-BARGAINING SURVEY**
  Please complete a two-question survey by Friday, Feb. 3, at noon: www.OregonRN.org/76

Collectively, Our Bargaining Team has Spent 308 Hours Working on Your Behalf

Photo: Our negotiators and nurse visitors spent much time waiting for the return of the employer’s team on our scheduled bargaining days. Pictured here: in back from left, Sandy Fleetwood, Elaine Beers, and LaVona Beck; in front from left, Judy Thibault and Ron Ferrand.
No Progress in Bargaining continued from Page 1

to several of our other proposals. See details in the article on page 3 and our updated bargaining tracker here.

While the employer has barely budged from their initial positions, our team has worked creatively by offering a compromise on differentials, two packages of trades, and several counter-proposals.

Moreover, we see a dramatic difference in each team’s level of engagement in the process. Our bargaining team has prioritized negotiations. On bargaining days, we set aside all other business to focus on the task at hand. By contrast, the employer’s team regularly arrives late and unprepared. Over the four days we have bargained, our team arrives at 9 a.m. and works until 5 p.m. The employer has been available to meet with us for anywhere from twenty minutes to less than a couple hours each morning with a brief afternoon follow-up.

Their lead negotiator, who is their chief decision-maker, is typically absent for the afternoon sessions. In total, she has spent less than seven hours in face-to-face meetings with our team in the four days of bargaining.

We remain hopeful that we can conclude an agreement in our next two scheduled bargaining sessions on Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 27 and 28. However, the employer’s rejections, delays, and disengagement from the process suggest they are unlikely to hasten their pace or move towards a compromise. Your attendance, if even for a couple minutes, may help pressure them to move forward.

Nurses have attended our bargaining sessions and caucuses in good numbers. Last week, another ten nurses visited the bargaining room. In total, twenty individuals have visited at least once to support our negotiation committee. Our bargaining team appreciate your attendance. Those who have visited have been surprised by our employer’s intransigence and unwillingness to engage in discussions with their most important employees.

We continue to seek your input on next steps. Please complete the survey and attend our membership meeting on Monday, Feb. 6, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., at Ichiban Restaurant, 1179 US Highway 101. Dinner is provided by your ONA so please come, let your voice be heard.

Interest-Based Bargaining on Home Health and Hospice

Despite meaningful and respectful exchange of information and ideas, PHH produces inadequate contractual proposals.

As we reported in December’s newsletter, we were hopeful that the employer’s willingness to participate in interest-based bargaining (IBB) around our home health and hospice (HH&H) service would address our concerns about on-call and safety. Prior to regular bargaining, two members from each team engaged in a productive, respectful, and meaningful exchange of ideas about challenges, constraints, and possible solutions. Typically, IBB produces compromises that are then incorporated into the agreement.

Instead, our employer took the information and brought to the table two proposals arising from those discussions. They proposed two Memorandums of Understandings (MOU) that offer little substantive change. In the first MOU, they copied language from another section of our contract and proposed applying it specifically to HH&H nurse. Their proposed

(Continued on page 3)
Safe Patient Care is the Result of Experienced RNs

Employer rejects our major proposals which support the recruitment and retention of nurses in our community

Safe patient care requires trained and experienced nurses. High employee turnover increases the chances of unsafe care and leads to higher costs. At Peace Harbor, we have a strong base of established nurses who have provided excellent care for many years. Our community deserves a local hospital that retains these quality nurses and recruits others who will remain here to make their home.

Our two major proposals around health care insurance and wages are designed to accomplish these goals. Some observers forecast nurse shortages in both our state and country. Rural hospitals, like PHH, often bear the brunt of these shortages. To avoid needless suffering, our hospital must offer adequate compensation to recruit and retain nurses.

As we detailed in our November newsletter, our facility is very profitable. PHH earned higher returns as a percent of patient revenue than our regional comparators, earning $37 million in net patient income in 2015. Our employer can afford to pay competitive wages and good benefits to recruit and retain nurses.

We propose a return to our health care insurance and discounts from a few years ago. In particular, we want the ability to negotiate our premiums and copays locally, instead of referencing whatever Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC) has bargained with the ONA bargaining unit for their facility. Our employer insists they cannot deviate from the standard PeaceHealth employee health plan. We also want to reinstitute previous discounts that PHH nurses had on (a) services provided by PeaceHealth and (b) purchases from the hospital pharmacy and materials management. The employer has rejected all of these proposals.

Furthermore, our wages are 4.9 percent below nurses at SHMC in Eugene and Springfield, on average comparing same years of service. To reach parity with SHMC, we propose 4 percent wage increases across the board each year, two new top steps, and step increases every two years (instead of three). The employer rejected these proposals as well as our efforts to increase differentials. Instead, the employer offered across the board wage increases of 1.5 percent upon ratification, 1.5
percent a year after ratification, and 1 percent two years after ratification. Our wage proposals would be retroactive to our contract expiration, Jan. 1, 2017.

Nurses have continued to speak loudly on the need for uniformed security at our facility. Last spring, several nurses met with local administrators and convinced them of the need for security professionals on our campus. Last fall, these uniformed professionals began night and weekend security coverage, which nurses very much appreciate.

Currently, facilities services provide security during weekdays, which is unfair to them as they have many other duties and tasks during the day. We want to enshrine and expand these services in our contract to keep nurses and patients safe around the clock. We do not want future administrators to be able to cancel the security contract without negotiating with us. The employer rejected this proposal as well.

2017 NURSE LOBBY DAY
Tuesday, February 14, 2017

ONA invites you to join nurses and nursing students from around Oregon to lobby on important nursing and health policy issues and to meet with your legislators.

Hundreds of nurses will rally at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem on Tuesday, February 14, 2017 to advocate for our patients and advance Oregon nurses’ practice.

It’s vital that we have nurses represented in the key decisions that are made about our priorities and key bills that will come up in the 2017 session.

ONA Nurse Lobby Day is open to all ONA members and student affiliates (Oregon Student Nurses Association members).

Visit www.OregonRN.org for more information and to register.