Our Bargaining Team Has Collectively Spent **445 Hours** Working on Your Behalf!
Of those 445 hours, our team negotiated 282 hours directly with the employer.

### NURSES UNITE!

At noon on Feb. 28, one-third of our bargaining unit at Peace Harbor Hospital (PHH) rallied to support our bargaining team’s efforts by participating in a unity break. Elaine Beers, an emergency room nurse and our bargaining unit co-chair, explained to the crowd, "We are attempting to get a contract that will be fair to everybody. The bottom line is this: we want the hospital to invest in the community, just as the community has invested in the hospital." Nurses who attended our unity break sought to encourage experienced nurses to stay at Peace Harbor. Bargaining team member Sandy Fleetwood said, "We are asking..." (Continued on page 2)

### Nurses from Sacred Heart and McKenzie-Willamette Show Support for Nurses at Peace Harbor

Above, standing from left: AFL-CIO staffer Phil Carrasco and bargaining team member Judy Thibault. Seated from left: Kevyn Paul, ONA labor relations representative Maureen Smith, and Billy Lindros. Paul and Lindros are nurses at Sacred Heart Medical Center.
for a package of health care benefits and wages to recruit and retain experienced nurses.”

Elaine Beers continued, “Peace Harbor has been good to us. I don’t want you to think that we have problems with the local administration.” She explained that in the same way recruiting physicians is difficult, it is difficult to recruit nurses to rural areas because of better pay in larger cities. “The staff and the community are very tied together. You support us and we take care of you,” Beers added. Our bargaining team’s proposals seek pay parity with SHMC, and employee discounts to recruit and keep nurses from seeking positions elsewhere.

Nurse leaders from across our region traveled to Peace Harbor to support our nurses, including Billy Lindros, recently retired from Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC) in Springfield; Kevyn Paul, from SHMC University District in Eugene; and Shannon Carpani from McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center (MCW) in Springfield. Thank you to all the nurses who showed up to support our bargaining effort!

OUR TEAM MAKES EFFORTS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL RECRUIT AND RETAIN EXPERIENCED NURSES

Citing “monumental differences,” our employer seeks mediation.

On Feb. 27 and 28, our bargaining team arrived at the negotiating table hopeful we could reach an agreement with our employer. We offered a total package that would have resolved all proposals, except for surgical services. The employer rejected our total package, saying we have “monumental differences,” and sought the assistance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, a federal agency that provides mediation for labor disputes. We have scheduled a mediation session with mediator Darrell Clark for April 10, 2017. Clark is a federal employee whose job is to help the parties reach an agreement. He is not an arbitrator and does not have authority to dictate a solution. His primary ability is to persuade each side to compromise.

On Feb. 28, we restructured our proposals to make them clearer to the employer, including a short notice premium and a stipend for nurses who work with sexual assault victims. While we rejected the employer’s proposal on home health and hospice (HH&H) as inadequate, we offered a proposal to hire at least one benefited on-call HH&H nurse to cover four shifts per pay period.

Despite their request for a mediator, the employer did move on some of our issues. In response to our successful unity break on Feb. 28, the employer agreed to our advanced education differential and made small movements on differentials for evening shift, night shift, and preceptor pay. They also proposed that a labor-management committee become a formal part of our contract, to which we agreed.

They accepted our concept of nurses donating earned leave to support the bargaining team, but we continue to wrangle over language.

We continue to stand firm on our health care benefits proposals, which would provide a 50-percent discount on clinical services for insured employees and a 25-percent discount for those not covered. The employer refuses to stray from the Peace Health benefits plan.

While the cost of living in Florence is similar to that in the Eugene-Springfield area, our wages are 4.9 percent below the wages of nurses at Peace Harbor Hospital.
We continue to see experienced nurses leave our community for better-paying jobs outside of Florence. Two of our units in particular, home health and hospice (HH&H) and surgical services, have seen high turnover. In the latter, three nurse positions have experienced tremendous churn, with nurses regularly leaving for positions elsewhere.

At HH&H, the most senior benefited nurse has been with Peace Harbor only four years, and the next most senior benefited nurse has been on the payroll only three years. These nurses bring many years of experience from other facilities, including examples of award-winning nursing, but working in a high-turnover environment is challenging. The rest of the nurses in HH&H are also experienced but many are newly-hired. This workgroup flux directly affects our ability to provide continuity of patient care.

We want to recruit and retain experienced nurses to care for our community. The cost of living in Florence is similar to surrounding cities, including the Eugene-Springfield area, and yet our nurses earn 4.9 percent less than nurses at Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC).

Moreover, our community has few rental properties, which means newly-hired nurses at Peace Harbor must commute far distances on dangerous roads at night, live in a camper near town, or buy a house immediately—something many newly-graduated nurses do not have the financial wherewithal to do. Given that benefits and wages are below market, many new hires decide to leave our community for other hospitals in our region. Our financial proposals would provide pay equity, which would hopefully entice those nurses to stay and become a part of our community.

We have offered a competitive financial package that reaches pay parity with SHMC. We also seek several additional benefits, especially employee discounts, which would encourage nurses to stay at Peace Harbor. We need your support to communicate this message to our employer.
Florence Community Meeting

What can you do to recruit and retain experienced nurses? Find out more about the nursing shortage at our upcoming community meeting.

Bring your family and friends!

Tuesday, April 4
6 p.m.
Florence Senior Center
1570 Kingwood St.

Members of our contract action team have distributed 200 window signs throughout our community. Please thank Jennifer Wilson, Sarah Green, Ken Wright, Penny Powers, Shannon Cook, Heidi Jarman, Cee Bennett, Judy Thibault, Kathy Callis, and Sandy Fleetwood for their hard work.