The Oregon Nurses Association/Peace Harbor Medical Center (ONA-PHMC) executive committee rang in the new year with a significant accomplishment – holding their first labor management committee (LMC) meeting with administration. This is a new committee that was agreed to in the most recent contract renewal under the new Article 22 Labor Management Committee. The purpose of the committee per the contract is “to foster improved communication between the Employer and Association, and to evaluate and lead to improvement of internal processes for the benefit, health, and safety of employees covered by this agreement. This Committee shall also evaluate and review recommendations to improve patient safety and overall patient and employee satisfaction. The Committee may act as a forum for sharing information to the Association on organizational changes and initiatives.”

The committee is currently comprised of the ONA-PHMC executive committee and three managers with the ability to expand it to eight members with each team having four representatives. While it has taken some time to get the committee up and running, the new committee quickly came to agreement on its charter and basic operations. This was facilitated by the fact that both teams participated in a joint training held in October of 2018 provided by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, an agency that supports labor-management engagement at unionized workplaces.

The first order of business for the LMC was the drafting of a charter which spells out how often the committee will meet, what constitutes a quorum and how decisions will be made among other details. Members of the committee also crafted a succinct statement to capture the main purpose of the LMC: “Our mission is to foster improvement and collaboration between management and nursing staff.” Nurses are welcome to attend LMC meetings as observers and guests will be invited to participate when there are topics identified that would benefit from having input from a non-committee member.

The LMC will meet quarterly for two hours unless both parties mutually agree to change this schedule. The next LMC is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m., location TBD. If you have topics or issues you believe should be addressed by the LMC, please reach out to your executive committee members; Sandy Fleetwood, Toby Knight-Meigs and Lorie Roeser.
Your Right to Representation

As a union member working under a collective bargaining agreement, you have specific rights when it comes to interactions with a supervisor or manager that might lead to discipline. These rights are known as Weingarten Rights from the Supreme Court case that established them. In that case the court ruled that an employee has the right to union representation in a meeting with a manager that the employee believes will or may result in discipline. Sometimes what a person thought was a friendly reminder from their manager turns out to be a verbal warning about a practice issue without the nurse realizing that in the moment. Managers should inform a nurse that a conversation is one that might lead to discipline but not all managers do this every time. Nurses should be ready to ask a manager directly, “Is this a conversation that could result in discipline?” If the answer is “yes” the nurse is advised to request a representative be present before proceeding. This right to representation can be evoked at any point during a conversation with a manager. The manager is obligated to accommodate the request and the conversation should be halted until a time at which a representative can be present. A representative can be your ONA labor representative, a steward or another ONA member. The role of this representative is to be a witness to the conversation, take notes, and if necessary, ensure the nurse is treated fairly in the meeting. Don’t be afraid to evoke this right if you believe it’s appropriate. You are also protected from retaliation for evoking your union rights.

Peace Harbor and Sacred Heart Home Care to be Brought Under a Single License

Nurses at Peace Harbor Home Care and Hospice and Sacred Heart Home Care Services learned in mid-December that their respective agencies will be brought under the same state license by PeaceHealth. According to Alicia Beymer, who serves as director for both units, this change will create efficiencies in patient care delivery and allow for “a nimble staffing model to meet geographic needs based on volumes and acuity” as well as other benefits to the agency. She referred to this combining of services as “PeaceHealth at Home” in her communication to staff.

The act of combining licenses does not have any affect on the two collective bargaining agreements under which nurses at these two agencies work since these are legal contracts that have no relationship to the agency license. However, it is expected that PeaceHealth will seek to have nurses provide cross coverage between the two separate geographic areas currently served by each bargaining unit. This would require negotiations with ONA and nurses from both bargaining units, and is not something PeaceHealth could impose unilaterally. It appears that non-ONA staff members have been assigned to work across agencies even before the combine licensing process has been completed. This means that ONA must be prepared to respond to a similar proposal for nurses to cross cover between agencies in a way that reflects the will of a majority of members in each bargaining unit. ONA would likely conduct a survey, as well as member meetings, to determine what nurse in each unit are willing to do in response to such a proposal. Members will have plenty of opportunities to weigh in should PeaceHealth approach ONA with a proposal of this kind.

If you have questions or concerns about this change in license or what might occur in the future, please contact your labor relations representative Claire Syrett by email at Syrett@OregonRN.org.
Professional Nursing Care Committee (PNCC) Re-established at Peace Harbor!

What is a PNCC you ask? Great question! First let’s introduce our committee members: Heidi Jarman RN – Surgical Services, Ron Ferrand RN – ICU, Med/Surg/OB and Chip Scott – Emergency Department are serving as your newly re-established PNCC. The scope and focus of a PNCC is to be the voice of staff nurses on issues of quality nursing care, safety of patients and a work environment which strengthens, while advancing the practice of nursing in Oregon to ensure patients in their care receive safe quality nursing care.

The committee is comprised solely of direct care registered nurses with a commitment to quality patient care. The focus of the committee is to clarify issues and concerns of staff, utilizing best practices, laws and regulations. They then work in collaboration with management to empower and educate nurses to elevate quality of patient care. The PNCC is established to facilitate involvement with the betterment of nursing staff thus ensuring the betterment of nursing care. Your PNCC is there to support you in improving and advancing your nursing practice. They can be called upon to weigh in on new policies as well as disciplines related to practice issues to ensure nurses are being supported in their success.

Join us for a Steward Dinner and Training Thursday, April 25 at 5:00 p.m.

Your executive team invites all current stewards, and anyone curious about possibly becoming a steward, to a dinner they are hosting at Chen’s Family Dish, 3620 US-101, Florence, on Thursday, April 25 at 5:00 p.m. Your ONA Labor Relations Representative Claire Syrett, will be there to provide an abbreviated steward training and refresher as well as to answer any questions you might have about the role of a steward and to discuss current issues or challenges you are seeing in the hospital or at Home Care and Hospice. Please RSVP to Sandy Fleetwood by email if you know you can make it, sandyfleetwood@charter.net.

Staffing Education & Advocacy Training

Have you recently been elected to your hospital’s staffing committee or do you desire to be a more prepared and effective staffing advocate? If so, we encourage you to take a SEAT with ONA for our online Staffing Education & Advocacy Training (SEAT). This is the only comprehensive staffing law training in Oregon and is available online through our OCEAN platform. It is available 24/7 and can be taken at your own pace. It is free for ONA members and available to non-members at a discounted price.

Nurses can earn 2.25 continuing nursing education contact hours for completion of the entire SEAT series.

Visit www.OregonRN.org/OnlineCE to get started.

Part 1: Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law
Part 2: How to Write a Better Nurse Staffing Committee Charter
Part 3: How to Write a Better Staffing Plan
Part 4: Staffing Committee Orientation

Oregon Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.
Don’t Miss Important ONA Emails

ONA wants to make sure all members receive timely communications, ensuring you have the most up-to-date information on your contract, bargaining issues, upcoming votes, nursing research, practice issues and workplace policies. If you are not receiving ONA emails, we can help.

First, check to make sure ONA emails are not being filtered into a junk, spam or clutter folder. Many email providers, like Comcast, Yahoo and Gmail, have built in Spam/Junk filters or blockers. The filters are intended to prevent you from getting junk mail or spam, but can unintentionally block emails you want to receive. If ONA emails are in one of these folders, flag them as “not junk” and add News@OregonRN.org to your safe sender list.

If there are no ONA emails in those folders and you still aren’t receiving ONA emails, there are various causes listed to the right.

You can fix most problems by simply emailing ONA at News@OregonRN.org with your name, personal email address and the name of the facility you work at in the body of the email.

We will update our records to ensure you don’t miss future ONA emails.

Common Reasons for Not Receiving ONA Emails

1. **Mislabeled:** Emails from ONA are being flagged as junk or spam by your email service provider.
2. **No Email:** ONA does not have an email on file for you.
3. **Bad Email:** ONA has an incorrect or outdated email on file.
4. **Blocked:** Due to several failed delivery attempts, our system has stopped attempting to send emails to your email address.
5. **Opted Out:** You have opted out of receiving emails.
6. **Work Email Filters:** Some health care systems filter out ONA emails so nurses don’t receive ONA-related emails. This is why we encourage nurses to use their personal email addresses instead of work emails.

Fixing Problems to Receive ONA Emails

1. **Check your junk/spam/clutter folder for ONA emails:** Flag ONA emails as “not junk/spam” and add News@OregonRN.org to your safe sender list.
2. **Email ONA:** To fix reasons 2-6, simply email ONA at News@OregonRN.org, and include your name, personal email and facility you work at in the body of the email.