Bargaining Continues in a Mode of Mutual Respect

The second day of negotiations at Peace Harbor Medical Center (PHMC) continued in the same positive and collaborative way that they began. In fact, members of both parties stated their appreciation for the productive and respectful atmosphere that has marked the discussions so far. Toby Knight-Miegs, of the ONA-PHMC negotiations team, thanked the PeaceHealth negotiations team for their respectful approach to the work noting that it was in stark contrast to the prior negotiations, which had been negative and combative. In response, Erika Skoog, lead negotiator for the PeaceHealth team, shared that it was a stated priority of the PHMC nursing leadership that these negotiations be a positive experience based on mutual respect. In addition, Ms. Skoog thanked the ONA-PHMC team for being willing to move towards the administration team’s position on some of their counter proposals noting that it showed the nurses’ willingness to find common ground and work to wrap up the negotiations within the schedule that has been mutually agreed upon.

The parties exchanged proposals on Article 3 “Definitions” which contemplates creating a new per diem classification similar to one at Sacred Heart Medical Center. Article 10 “Paid Time Off” (PTO) was also on the table with the ONA team seeking to clarify the rate of pay at which PTO is paid out as well as proposing to return to the timeline for requesting PTO that had been in place prior to the 2016 contract. Both parties agreed that returning to the older timeline was preferable for both nurses and managers.

PHMC also put forward a counter proposal on Article 8 “Hours of Work” that would clarify when meals and breaks were required, in alignment with state law. They accepted language put forward by the ONA team that would make it explicit that missing a meal or break could not be used as a basis for disciplinary action but they were not yet ready to accept other ONA language that would prohibit any public criticism of nurses who missed a meal or break.

ONA responded to the administration’s counter proposal on Article 6 “Employment Status” which addresses discipline. While the nurses agreed to drop some of their proposed language, they stood firm on seeking to imbed language that references the requirement that discipline be issued on a progressive basis.

Other articles put forward by the ONA
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team included one that would require the hospital to provide PHMC nurses with parity with other PeaceHealth facilities for accessing wellness and other health benefits as well as proposing the creation of a clinical ladder to attract, retain and reward nurses who step up within their professional practice and within their workplace. Sacred Heart Medical Center has a clinical ladder that has been codified in their most recent contract which might be used as a model. The ONA team also put forward a proposal that would require PeaceHealth to provide on-site human resources support at PHMC for an average of 64 hours a month. This would greatly benefit nurses (and other staff members) in addressing the various administrative and payroll issues that routinely arise at the hospital.

The teams are scheduled to meet again on Friday, Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. in Conference Room D. Thank you to the ONA members who stopped by during negotiations this week. It is great to have you there. Please come by if you are able to sit in on the negotiations. Wear your “I ♥ Nurses” button and show your support for your negotiations team!

We are Still Recruiting for the CAT!

The Peace Harbor Negotiations Contract Action Team (CAT) is the vital link between the bargaining team and the membership. We already have nurses who have stepped up to be part of the CAT. But we need a few more good folks to get involved. CAT members are responsible for being in regular contact with their department cohort or program about the contract and bargaining. Serving on the CAT is a small commitment but it is a great way to help gain the contract ONA members deserve.

There are two main responsibilities of being on the CAT:

- Communications
- Organizing

**Communications:** Good contracts require having a good communications network. We need folks to pass on updates and collect feedback from the members throughout the negotiation process.

Some effective tools for communication we encourage are fliers, Facebook texts, emails and phone trees. Your bargaining team will provide the information that needs to be communicated, but it will be up to the CAT to help us get it out and gather feedback. This is a critical role and the more folks we have doing it the better.

Collecting feedback will also be an important role for the CAT. There will be times when your team will need quick feedback on possible proposals. CAT members will be asked to help collect that feedback in real time we can keep moving in the right direction.

**Organizing:** CAT members will also be needed to organize activities which might include a petition drive, pep rally or, if necessary, an informational picket. Helping to get people to show up at certain key moments during negotiations will play a pivotal role in winning the day. Being able to mobilize our members is vital to showing administration that nurses support the bargaining team and their efforts to win a great contract.

This is a great opportunity to help out the bargaining team without being on the front lines. It’s a vital role that needs at least one person from each shift in each department if we want to be at 100%. Help be part of the next contract win and sign up to be a CAT member.

If you’re interested in joining CAT, talk to one of the bargaining team members or email Claire Syrett at Syrett@OregonRN.org, or Tyler Whitmire at Whitmire@OregonRN.org.