Peace Harbor Medical Center (PHMC)
Bargaining Update #4
Feb. 10, 2020

Three Tentative Agreements!

Third Day of Negotiations Brings Three Tentative Agreements!

Oregon Nurses Association Peace Harbor Medical Center (ONA-PHMC) and Peace Harbor administration signed off on three areas of tentative agreement (TA) on our third day of bargaining for a new contract. This was a small but significant milestone in the negotiations which have been productive as well as respectful in tone. Both teams have been working diligently to keep the forward momentum going with the goal of achieving a final agreement before the contract expires on March 31.

While one of the TAs was a mere formality, the other two provided tangible benefit for ONA members. The parties agreed to language in Article 12 Seniority, under Article 12.4 Bargaining Unit List, that would ensure that seniority lists are posted by the administration. This had been a long-standing practice that was neglected in recent years. The ONA team believed it was important to have this clear language in the contract so that the practice would not be lost again in the future under new managers. After some back and forth on how the language would read, the Medical Center agreed to the provision. Posting of the seniority list on a scheduled basis is important for nurses to know where they sit on the list when applying for vacant positions.

Second TA reached will add language to Article 13 Posting of Vacancies to allow a nurse to transfer back to their former unit in the event a new position they have taken is not a good fit. The language, modeled on language in the Sacred Heart Medical Center contract, is in Article 13.2 Selection Process and adds a new provision “13.2 c. Trial transfer period. A staff nurse who transfers from one department to another shall be on a one-month trial period following orientation, as long as such trial period does not extend beyond two (2) months from date of transfer. If, during such trial period based upon performance, the Medical Center or the nurse determines that the nurse should not be continued in the new position, the nurse shall be returned to his/her former position (if available), with in-unit seniority restored, or to his/her original unit and shift as a per diem nurse.”

This language protects nurses who take a chance on a new position from losing their job should the new position not be suitable for them. Up to now, nurses who transferred to another department lost any rights to their former position and

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Negotiations Dates & Room Locations:
Feb. 12 Conference Room D
Feb. 19 Conference Room C
Feb. 20 Conference Room D
Feb. 24 Conference Room C
Feb. 25 Conference Room D

Most sessions are scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be breaks for team caucus.

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could be let go or forced to take a position in a unit they didn’t wish to work in, if their new position wasn’t working for them. The section providing that they could move to per diem status if their prior position was filled provides protection for any newly hired nurse who filled the spot vacated by the nurse who took position in another unit. This new language will provide greater job security for nurses at Peace Harbor and allow them to seek new opportunities within the Medical Center with reduced risk.

The third TA was to eliminate the On-Call Obstetrics Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which had already been ended by the Medical Center in negotiations with ONA in 2019. This was a formality as the MOU was no longer in effect.

The bargaining teams exchanged a number of other proposals throughout the day including one that deals with missed meals and breaks. The teams engaged in robust dialogue on this topic when the Medical Center team continued to reject language offered by the ONA team that would bar any public criticism of nurses who missed a meal or break or who accurately recorded missing a meal or break. The Medical Center felt the language was too negative and implied that such criticism was standard practice for managers. They pointed to the Leadership Behavioral standard as prohibiting such active on the part of managers. This did not persuade the nurses who were able to point to this practice still occurring on the floors. The ONA team is considering how the language might be modified to meet the needs of both parties.

The Medical Center offered a disappointing response to the ONA team’s proposal to establish a clinical ladder advancement program for Peace Harbor nurses that would be developed by nurses and leadership at the hospital. Instead of providing a revised version of the ONA proposal, the Medical Center put forward language that essentially said if PeaceHealth developed a clinical ladder for the whole PeaceHealth network they would consider establishing one for Peace Harbor. The nurses asked how much local input would be allowed for the program. The Medical Center team couldn’t offer clear responses. Robin Allen, Director of Nursing at PHMC, stated her intention to move this system initiative forward in 2020 in order to establish a program for PHMC in 2021. While this was welcome information it did not provide the clear reassurance sought by the ONA team that a local program would be developed. The idea of a clinical ladder developed out of the corporate headquarters in Vancouver, WA, even with Ms. Allen’s input. was not appealing to the nurses. The proposal they put forward to create a program locally recognized the unique characteristics of PHMC and there is real skepticism that a program developed in Vancouver would adequately reflect those and serve the needs and desires of nurses at PHMC.

The teams meet again on Tuesday, Feb. 12 in Conference Room D which will be the last day to put forward new proposals. The ONA team will put forward their proposal on wages, differentials and professional development at that session. The team is pleased with how the negotiations are progressing and hope that the positive and respectful tone will continue through the end of bargaining.

Please come by and sit in on the sessions if you are able. Having nurses in the room is meaningful to the bargaining team and helps remind the administration’s team that these negotiations are being conducted on your behalf. Thanks to the members who stopped by and gave the team a boost during the long day on Friday. Your presence makes a real difference!