The Peace Harbor Medical Center Oregon Nurses Association (PHMC-ONA) negotiations team continued to work through proposals with the PHMC administration team on Wednesday. While no new tentative agreements were reached, the parties exchanged proposals and engaged in constructive dialogue.

The Medical Center proposed the creation of a PHMC Workplace Violence Prevention Committee that would include two nurses (one from the hospital and one from home health and hospice) as well as other PHMC staff. These nurses would also participate on the Oregon Network Workplace Violence Prevention Committee with their time spent working on these committees and in subcommittee being paid time. This was a modification of an earlier version of this proposal.

On a more disappointing note, the Medical Center rejected the ONA team’s proposal that nurses be provided with equitable access to health benefits such as the wellness program perks and a locally accessible pharmacy discount. The nurses pointed out that most of the wellness program benefits are only accessible in the Eugene or Portland area. ICU nurse Ian Jarman noted the abundance of recreation and entertainment opportunities on the coast that could be included in this program.

continued on page 2
Bargaining Team Continues Hard Work of Negotiations (continued from page 1)

Erika Skoog, lead negotiator for the Medical Center, responded that PeaceHealth contracts with a third party to provide this program and said she would look into what local additions might be explored.

The ONA team put forward a proposal on Article 16 Professional Development that would greatly increase the continuing education dollars available to nurses. This is to acknowledge both the increased cost of professional conferences as well as the increase in the number of nurses working in the bargaining unit over the past two years. This proposal also included a provision for on-site administrative support for submitting reimbursement requests so that no nurse personally incurs expenses related to continuing education. That proposal generated a great deal of discussion about the very challenging process that involves using the new Sync system. The nurses learned that even managers and high-level administrators find the Sync system problematic, but so far there is no indication that PeaceHealth will implement an easier system soon. The ONA team shared that there are nurses, included members of the bargaining team, who have given up on getting reimbursed for educational expenses. Ms. Skoog offered to provide direct assistance to any nurses in that position (See Help Available article).

The ONA team put forward an initial proposal on compensation as well. They are seeking increases in a number of differentials that acknowledges both the higher cost of living here in Florence as well as the benefit of keeping parity with the Sacred Heart Medical Center contract in order to attract and retain nurses at PHMC. They are also seeking to add a tier 3 call rate of pay for both surgical services and home health and hospice to account for the very high rate of call both units experience.

In addition, the ONA team has proposed premium pay for working a sixth and consecutive day and any other days beyond that.

Thanks to the nurses who came to visit during the day and for those of you who signed the wonderful poster which now hangs in the negotiations room.

With only four more sessions scheduled, the team will be working diligently to reach an agreement. More sessions will be added if needed.

Please come by and observe – it make a big difference for both teams to know nurses are paying attention.

Help Available

Have you given up on using sync? Do you have unreimbursed education expenses?

If you have incurred expenses for which you are entitled to be reimbursed and haven’t been able to navigate the Sync system or aren’t sure if your reimbursement request was received, you can contact Erika Skoog for assistance.

She will help resolve these challenges for any bona fide expenses that should be reimbursed by PeaceHealth. She can be reached by email at eskoog@peacehealth.org.

The 2020 ONA Convention and House of Delegates will be held on Monday, May 18 (CE Day) and Tuesday, May 19 (House of Delegates) in Portland, OR.

Register today at www.OregonRN.org