The Peace Harbor Medical Center (PHMC) Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) bargaining team met with Peace Harbor administration for two days of negotiations this week. In spite of working late into the evening on Tuesday, the teams were not able to reach a final tentative agreement (TA). However, they made significant progress through the exchange of package proposals that included all outstanding issues.

A major issue the ONA team pressed was the need for a third tier of call pay for both Surgical Services and Home Health and Hospice nurses. On Tuesday, nurses filled the negotiation room with nurses from Surgical Services addressing the administration team about the challenge they face taking on the large amount of call they have (almost ten times what Sacred Heart nurses take.) Operating Room (OR) nurse Della Burget shared that the burden of excess call puts a strain on nurses. They are often on call every other day and on the weekends. OR nurse Casey Hand echoed Della’s testimony, saying that he loves working at Peace Harbor Medical Center and his co-workers and he loves his community which is why he hasn’t sought work elsewhere. But, Casey added, taking call every day for month, which he did when the unit was short staffed, is too much and diminishes his quality of life. ONA bargaining team member Lorie Roeser, who until recently worked in Home Health and Hospice, spoke to the recent loss of nurses in that department (including her) due to excess call. She shared that nurses in that unit were extremely stressed due to having to take call overnight and still be prepared to visit patients the next day. The administration team listened respectfully but have not yet provided a formal response to the latest proposal put forward by the ONA team. That proposal would create a Surgical Services third tier of call pay at triple the call rate of pay ($12.00) for hours on call in excess of 96 hours in a four-week cycle and for Home Health and Hospice a third tier of call pay paid at $12.00 for all hours on call in excess of 64 hours in a five-week period. The administration team has agreed that a third tier of call should be created for Home Health and Hospice but with different thresholds. They have not yet accepted the proposal for a third tier call rate for Surgical Services.

On Monday the teams did reach a TA on two articles. One was Article 11 Leaves of Absence which updated the bereavement leave benefit to reflect current PeaceHealth policy. It replaced the prior language that provided up to 36 hours of leave within 14 days with the ability to take up to four scheduled shifts within 60 days of a death of a significant person. The teams also reached a TA on Article 15 Health and Welfare adding provisions that are currently provided by PeaceHealth policy into the contract. One new provision says that a nurse or their dependent covered by PeaceHealth

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**Negotiations Dates & Room Locations:**

Thursday, March 12 - Tentative Location TBA

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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**Oregon Nurses Association**

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www.OregonRN.org
Nurses Stand Firm on Need for Relief from Excessive Call (continued from page 1)

insurance shall receive the most favorable rate for any service received at a PeaceHealth facility. This means that they must provide ONA members with the same rate that they have offered any insurance company if its better than what is covered under the nurse’s PeaceHealth insurance. The new language includes a provision regarding the chronic conditions program that provides for no-cost medication and related supplies for nurses and their dependents who suffer from diabetes, COPD, asthma, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease and hypertension. This is currently PeaceHealth policy but having it in the contract means it can’t be changed over the life of this agreement and it help ensure more nurses are aware of this benefit and will take advantage of it.

Monday evening the ONA bargaining team held a bargaining unit meeting to check in with nurses about negotiations. The team explained where things stood with current proposals and received feedback from nurses on their concerns and priorities. The meeting helped confirm that the bargaining team was on the right track in how they were representing bargaining unit members at the table.

On Tuesday, both teams worked diligently to exchange package proposals in an attempt to bring the negotiations to a close more quickly while not losing sight of the nurses’ priorities. They adjourned after 10:00 p.m. Tuesday evening with the ONA team presenting their latest package which includes accepting a four-year contract with a wage increase of 3% for three years and 3.5% in a fourth year as well as adding a new top step in 2022. The administration team had indicated they are agreeable to adding a new top step but in the fourth year of the contract and extending the amount of time a nurse would have to sit at that step from the contract’s current pattern of two years to five. A significant number of Peace Harbor nurses are currently at or near the top step of the wage scale so adding a new step would be a real benefit. In addition, the ONA team withdrew their proposal for a new premium pay of "6th and Consecutive" indicating that retaining current double time and tier two call pay premiums were a greater priority. The administration team had tied their acceptance of a new “6th and consecutive” rate to giving up double time and the OR tier two call pay. The packages also included Article 16 Professional development. The administration team did propose an increase to $1,000 for the annual amount a nurse can access in professional development funds. But the two sides are still apart on how much the funds will be with the ONA team proposing $30,000 upon ratification increasing to $40,000 in the third year of the contract. In addition the teams were in agreement on adding language to Article 8 Hours of Work around floating that would provide nurses with greater input into the floating assignments they are asked to take as well as set up a system for tracking floating so that no single nurse is always asked to be the one who floats. This would be new language in the contract and provide a stronger voice for nurses in their workplace.

The teams did come closer on increasing a number of differentials including evening and night shift, weekend differential and certification pay with some of those increasing over the four years of the contract. They have also agreed to increase the differential for advanced education pay from 3% to 4% for Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) and from 4% to 5% for a Masters. Many Peace Harbor nurses have their BSN so this increase will have a real impact on the bargaining unit. These increases will bring the Peace Harbor compensation closer in line with the Sacred Heart Medical Center and could help attract and retain nurses in Florence who might otherwise consider working at Riverbend.

While the teams were motivated to wrap up negotiations on Tuesday they simply ran out of time. The next negotiations session is tentatively scheduled for March 12 but the teams will meet sooner if a date can be found that works for both teams. The ONA team expects that session to be the last one if the teams can come to agreement on the priority issues for nurses.

Thank you to all the nurses who came to observe and provide testimony on your breaks or day off. Your presence in the negotiations room provided both teams with an important reminder that they are working on your behalf and in your interest. A good contract can only be accomplished if nurses are invested in the outcome. Showing up makes a difference!
Nomination Deadline Extended to March 6

To learn more and be a delegate, visit www.OregonRN.org/Delegate

Your voice matters. Be part of ONA’s primary governing body, the House of Delegates (HOD). As a delegate you will discuss and vote on resolutions, amendments and other initiatives that will determine ONA’s direction.

Bring your perspective and join us at the 2020 House of Delegates on May 19 in Portland.

Visit www.OregonRN.org/Delegate for more information and to complete your delegate nomination form.

Questions about statewide offices or delegates? Email or call ONA Chief of Staff Whitney Wong at Wong@OregonRN.org or 503-293 -0011 ext. 1325.
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.

The convention’s theme is “Rising Up Together” and will feature sessions on professional development, nursing practice and workplace issues, as well as topics critical to ONA’s strategic plan including equity and inclusion.

**Featured Topics**
- Keynote: Healthcare Equity
- Oregon’s Hospital Nurse Staffing Law
- Supporting Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
- Caring for the Queer Community
- How to Win Organizing and Contract Campaigns
- Importance of SANEs in Response to Sexual Assault
- Developing Cultural Humility
- and more!

**Continuing Education**

Participants of the CE day on Monday, May 18 will be able to earn up to 5.25 continuing nursing education contact hours.

Oregon Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

**Registration and Fees**

Registration is open through May 1, 2020.

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Register today at www.OregonRN.org