
Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is working hard to make sure that nurses and our patients are taken care of during this time.

ONA has set up a resource page for our nurses at OregonRN.org/Coronavirus. The page contains details about the work we have been doing and will be updated with the latest COVID-19 information.

As a reminder, while there has been both a national emergency and a state of emergency declared in Oregon, our contract remains in place.

Changes to your scheduling and hours must be negotiated. The state of emergency declaration for Oregon allows for the provisions of the staffing law to be waived. If the hospital has declared an emergency:

◆ Your units do not have to follow the staffing plan.
◆ Staffing law prohibitions on mandatory overtime are waived.
◆ While provisions of the Oregon hospital nurse staffing law may be waived, our contract is in effect, so contract language must be followed.

Personal Protective Equipment

What should a nurse do when they feel their assignment is not safe due to not having appropriate or adequate personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Nurses who are immunocompromised should notify their employers now, or as soon as possible of the risks involved in caring for a patient with COVID-19, asking not to take care of these patients. If this request is refused, please document that refusal.

If a nurse is asked to care for a patient with COVID-19 and does not believe that they have the PPE necessary to do so safely, then it is important to raise those concerns.

First, make sure you are aware of what the current OHA guidelines for the type of patient they are asking you to care for (rule-out/positive/monitoring).

If you have determined that you are being asked to take an assignment you don’t feel is safe, then raise that issue according to the following chain of escalation: Charge Nurse, then supervisor or manager.
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Clarify what your concerns are, what the evidence supporting that concern is, and then ask for the PPE that you think is needed.

If you are still being directed to accept the assignment, accept the assignment, then file an SRDF (go to: www.OregonRN.org/SRDF) and contact your labor representative or bargaining unit leader.

While we recognize that this current situation is fluid and rapidly evolving, the safety of our members is important and can’t just be sacrificed.

COVID-19 Survey

To report a violation of Coronavirus protocol in your facility, please email practice@oregonrn.org with as many details as possible while being mindful of HIPAA guidelines.

ONA is also asking all members to take an ONA COVID-19 Workplace Survey to help better understand the work being done by facilities across the state.

To stay up to date on the work being done and to take the COVID-19 Workplace survey, visit:

[COVID-19 Workplace Survey Link]

Oregon State Board of Nursing Position Statement: COVID-19

Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) has updated their position statement concerning refusal of assignment related to COVID-19:

The global spread of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) is a rapidly evolving situation. This event has also resulted in confusing and conflicting information regarding transmission, healthcare worker precautions, high-risk categorizations, etc.

Each medical facility/organization decides for itself and its personnel whether to follow Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recommendations or recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The Board of Nursing has no jurisdiction over individual employers.

The Oregon State Board of Nursing has received reports that nurses are refusing to accept patient assignments unless their hospital/facility follows WHO or CDC guidelines rather than OHA guidelines regarding personal protective equipment (PPE).

In the Governor’s declared State of Emergency authorization, OHA was tasked to provide the state response to COVID-19. Nurses cannot refuse an assignment solely because the employer is utilizing OHA guidelines rather than WHO or CDC guidelines.

All nurses and nursing assistants are entitled to keep themselves safe through appropriate use of PPE. The Board of Nursing does not expect nurses to work without PPE. The Nurse Practice Act will always support the ability of a nurse to refuse an assignment when they do not have the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities to safely accept it. Having PPE, or not having PPE, comes under the “abilities” section of the practice act.
EIT Waiting Period

**EIT Waiting Period Temporarily Waived**

To help limit the spread of the COVID-19 disease, the waiting period for accessing Extended Illness Banks/Time (EIB/EIT) has been waived. This will continue until the spread of COVID-19 has reduced in our community.

To be eligible to use your EIB/EIT, you must obtain a certification from a health care provider.

Since getting to your regular provider might be challenging at this time, please use ExpressCare Virtual to reach a provider and obtain certification.

ONA Convention and House of Delegates Postponed

To ensure the health and safety of our members through the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA has made the decision to postpone the ONA Convention and House of Delegates. We took this decision very seriously and felt it is in the best interests of our members.

The new dates will be Sept. 21-22, 2020 in Portland. More details to come.

**Important Information about Postponed Convention**

Those who have registered for the convention will have their event registrations canceled and will be refunded their registration fees. We will open registration again at a later date and will ask everyone to register again at that point.

If you have reserved a hotel room, you must call to cancel your reservations as this will not be done automatically.

ONA constituent association delegates will not have to reapply to be delegates. However, everyone will have to register to attend the convention again once the schedule of events is finalized.

If you have any questions, please contact us at News@OregonRN.org.

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.
As more cases of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) are reported and confirmed, ONA will continue working relentlessly to do the work needed to keep nurses and our communities safe.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

To help nurses and health care workers navigate the COVID-19 crisis, ONA has compiled a frequently asked questions document. Please check the FAQ to find the answers you need.

- Click here to view the ONA COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions document or visit www.OregonRN.org/coronavirus

**Declining an Unsafe Assignment**

ONA has issued guidance to our members on declining unsafe assignments for COVID-19 patients when lack of PPE, safe staffing levels, or breakdown of triage protocols put your health at risk.

Visit www.oregonrn.org/declining-unsafe-assignments to learn more.

**PPE Shortage**

It is critical to get PPE in the hands of the frontline health care workers who need them in their fight against COVID-19. First and foremost, we are communicating the need for PPE. This requires federal action and we are also asking the legislature to pass similar emergency funding legislation to California and Washington to support public health.

We are calling on the governor and the Oregon legislature to ensure every protection is taken to prioritize Oregon workers and to make sure health care workers are able to continue to work. This includes adequate personal protective equipment, accessible and affordable childcare, and incentivizing nurses who work in other sectors or departments to take on high-risk shifts.

Help raise awareness of the PPE shortage and how it impacts nurses and other health care workers on the frontline of care by adding a "PPE Now!" frame to your Facebook profile picture.

- Add a frame to your Facebook profile picture to call for more PPE now!
- Click here to learn more about donating PPE

**Report Violations**

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