Negotiations Come to a Pause

On Thursday, May 28, your Oregon Nurses Association (ONA)/PMMC team met with Providence Medford Medical Center (PMMC) for another round of virtual negotiations.

During the previous session PMMC presented that due to the uncertainty related to the pandemic they would not negotiate financial changes in the contract.

Your negotiation team took this information back to the bargaining unit and had many good conversations around this subject, including our first Facebook live Q&A session hosted by Dan Richmond. This information was used to make a difficult decision on what our next steps will be. After much deliberation you team decided to offer an extension to our current contract until March 31, 2021.

What Does an Extension Mean for the Bargaining Unit?

Your ONA/PMMC team decided on doing an extension for several strategic reasons:

- The team heard from nurses that they are needing a sense of stability in these unprecedented times. Having an extension leaves in place our current contract with no changes. This allows us to not have to institute new verbiage and meanings. Instead, we can focus on making what we have work better and enforce existing contract sections.
- Although the extension is until March 31 we are working on securing dates as early as October to continue negotiations with a goal of having a contract signed by March 31.
- This pause will allow your team to use the time to organize our bargaining unit into a strong dynamic force. This will include individuals coming forward to be part of the internal structures such as stewards, contract action team (CAT), professional nurse care committee (PNCC) and the staffing committee.
- Your team is in the process of requesting financial information from Providence. The extension creates a pause period and will give us time to evaluate the actual financial impacts of the pandemic and the health and}

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wealth of Providence as a system.

This will also give time to analyze any further Federal CARES ACT support Providence receives. This will allow us to have a broader view of the entire situation and help provide an opportunity to hold Providence accountable.

Next Steps

Your team can not emphasize enough the importance of the next steps needed which is bargaining unit engagement. When nurses are united and participate in mass, we win.

We have over 300 RNs in our bargaining unit and this means each person in the bargaining unit has an important part on how we can move the gauge and be in a better position when we sit back down at the table. We want everybody to feel they are part of a team that is helping all of nurses at PMMC get a stronger contract.

Staying involved in contract negotiations became tricky with all the disruption caused by the pandemic and social distancing. However, we have created an opportunity with an extension to adapt our bargaining unit to our new reality.

One of the most effective means of organizing to build strength is face to face conversations with your co-workers. Your team is also looking at new ways to organize and stay in touch, including Zoom meetings and trainings. Reaching out and becoming involved means knowing what is going on and how it is affecting your work environment.

Having the willingness to be aware and bring issues forward is how we identify issues to be worked on and create positive change.

One of the most basic ways to start becoming involved is to talk with a local bargaining unit officer or simply email your ONA labor representative Julie Serrano at Serrano@OregonRN.org.

Before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA is here for Oregon nurses.

We have fought for emergency temporary COVID-19 contract protections for health care workers across Oregon, and collectively bargained them in 75% of ONA represented facilities so far.

We have developed groundbreaking nursing practice guidance on the questions that matter most to our members, including guidance on how to safely decline unsafe assignments due to lack of adequate PPE, and the ongoing crisis of PPE reuse in Oregon healthcare facilities. We have taken collective action together, 15,000 nurses and health care workers united together for FDA-approved PPE, safe triage and intake protocols, paid admin leave for all nurses exposed, and the practice standards we need to safely treat our patients in a pandemic.

Now, we are acting to protect the nurses and health care workers who are in financial trouble because of COVID-19 impacts to staffing in our hospitals, clinics, and facilities. If you are experiencing financial hardship as a result of changes inside your hospital related to COVID-19, your union and professional association is here for you.

Contact us at memberservices@OregonRN.org today about how we can help if you are struggling financially because of COVID-19.