MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
For a better bargaining unit and a stronger voice for PNMC nurses.

Working Together Works!

On Thursday, July 6, a group of six nurses met with Chief Nursing Officer Yvonne Kirk to address ongoing policy violations that a supervisor committed. Another staff member who could not attend submitted a written statement. This group has been organizing their thoughts about this supervisor’s behavior for some time now, but in the last month, they realized that by standing together, they would be able to address their concerns in a much more effective way than if they reported this supervisor’s actions individually. Valerie Whitmore, ONA bargaining unit chair, said the following:

“A group of brave nurses came forward to highlight injustice in their departments. We as nurses have always advocated for our patients and quality care, but have found this difficult to do for ourselves. It is exceedingly difficult to stand up to injustice, but the effort of these nurses highlighted the strength of nurses as individuals and the collective strength of acting in solidarity as a union of nurses. We had protection, legal advice, and a platform from which to work from which was invaluable in coordinating this effort. I am proud of every RN and staff member that spoke out and grateful for our resources as an ONA facility to be able to escalate these concerns. When we stand in solidarity with each other, we are unstoppable.”

This supervisor was immediately put on leave, pending investigation.
Our Staffing Committee is Making Headway!

Since January 2017, our new staffing committee has been meeting with the administration about a house-wide staffing plan on nearly a monthly basis. The administration was insistent that a house-wide plan must be in effect and that department specific plans would be attached to it. This was difficult for us to accept, as the Oregon Staffing Law requires that the staffing plans take into account Admissions, Discharges, and Transfers (ADT), acuity, national guidelines for each specialty, and much more. It’s impossible to include all of these metrics for each department in one plan.

After our committee meeting on May 18, staffing committee co-chair Savannah Jensen, conferred with ONA nurse practice consultant Jordan Ferris and ONA labor representative Jocelyn Pitman, about the house-wide plan. We found it difficult to proceed with the plan as written, since the plan reiterated parts of the law and that did not seem necessary or right. We reached out to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), which is the entity that insures that the staffing law is followed. We were informed by their nurse staffing policy analyst that the plan as written was not in compliance. We were at risk for being cited and fined if the laws were included verbatim. The risk is that language that is not part of the current rules may be included.

We were able to proceed with the house-wide staffing plan, but it needed to be heavily edited. We shortened the policy from four pages down to less than a page. The frontline nurse component of the committee worked on this on their personal time. We sent this to the administration, along with the comments from OHA.  

Med/Surg Officer Nominations Are Open!

For several months, we have had an officer vacancy in Med/Surg. This is an issue since Med/Surg is the largest department and needs to be represented during the contract negotiations starting early next year. The role of an officer is to make sure that the contract is enforced, act as communicators for the unit, and help bargain the contract. They attend monthly meetings with their fellow officers, their labor representative, and administration to make sure that the contract is being followed. They may also represent a co-worker with assistance from their labor representative. ONA offers training for all of the tasks that an officer is expected to perform.

Med/Surg charge RN Debra Bonn has recently decided to run for this position! She has consented to serve as Treasurer, a position which was until recently vacant.

If you are a member in good standing and you would like to also run for the Med/Surg and Treasurer seat, please let Jocelyn Pitman, Labor Representative know by Aug.10, 2017. She can be reached at pitman@oregonrn.org.
On June 15, we met with the administration again. We were able to pass the house-wide staffing plan with only a few minor changes. This was a major accomplishment after several months of not making headway. We want to thank both the frontline nurses and the administration that make up the staffing committee. We were finally able to work together in a collaborative fashion and we expect that this good collaboration will continue for the real work ahead: passing the department-specific plans.

If you are interested in being an observer, please let Savannah Jensen know. We will gladly arrange for you to be there.

Please take the time to thank your staffing committee for the good work they have done: Savannah Jensen, co-chair from Med/Surg; Denise O’Connell, ICU; Amy Brenner, Surgical Services; Brandi Osborne, Family Birth; Jason Lehman, ED.

Proactive Privacy Monitoring and Your Weingarten Rights

We were recently made aware that the regional Providence compliance office is regularly running audits of charts with a proactive privacy monitoring (PPM) program. The intent is to assess whether any employees are accessing charts of family members or other people that may live in your home. For example, if your home address matches the patient’s address, that access will be flagged. This algorithm behind the scenes would also match access to patients that have the same last name of the employee. There are other criteria that compliance looks at as well, so it is good to be cautious when coming across someone you know in any capacity.

Always be conscientious when coming across the record of a family member, someone that lives in your home, someone famous or infamous, or anyone else you may know. Make sure that if you do access the record, that it is only for a clear business need while you are taking care of the patient. Document that clearly in the chart so that if you are brought into an investigatory meeting, you can easily defend your access.

If you are called into a meeting with compliance, it is reasonable to assume that the meeting could lead to discipline. You are entitled to representation by an ONA representative. This entitlement is known as your Weingarten Rights.

Start the meeting by saying something to the effect of:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my discipline or termination, or affect my personal working conditions, I request an association representative, steward or officer present. Unless I have this representation I respectfully choose to not participate in this discussion”.

If an ONA representative, steward, or officer is not readily available the employer will need to

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reschedule the meeting. If they don’t, they could be committing an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) which is a federal violation.

The same statement can be used for any meeting that could lead to discipline.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact your steward, ONA officer, or labor representative.

Prime Time for PTO

Summer is now in full swing, and undoubtedly nurses want time off for all the fun outdoor activities that happen this time of year. This is a gentle reminder that there is a maximum amount of time allowed off between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend.

Article 5 E (6) states:

‘‘Prime Time 1’ is defined as the period from November 20 through January 5, and the Spring Break week observed by the Newberg School District (including the weekends before and after). ‘Prime Time 2’ is defined as the Memorial Day weekend through the Labor Day weekend. All nurses will be limited to a maximum of two weeks of PTO during each prime time period. Once all pre-scheduled PTO requests have been granted, unclaimed ‘prime time’ shall be posted on the unit.’’

In addition, Article 6 A (7) states:

“Holiday scheduling requests shall be granted or denied prior to the regular scheduling period for ‘prime time’ PTO requests.”

Please follow the two week rule so that we all have the opportunity to have a summer vacation.

Important ONA Nurse Resources

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Register for ONA BU Leadership Conference

Sept. 19-20, 2017 • Portland, OR

Upgrade your nurse leadership skills at ONA’s Bargaining Unit Leadership Conference Sept. 19-20 at the Portland Hilton and Executive Towers in downtown Portland.

- Solve local issues through concerted actions
- Build strength through issue-based organizing
- Identify and develop nurse leaders

Join ONA nurses and staff from across Oregon to discover new ways to engage your coworkers, build nurse strength and create a community of committed advocates who can lead changes in your facility.

Agenda and Topics

This year, participants will chose one of two educational tracks to attend with sessions designed to develop and hone skills related to that topic. The tracks are:

- Building Power Through Workplace Action

Continuing Education

Attendees will be able to earn continuing nursing education contact hours at the conference. Information about which courses and sessions qualify for CE and the number of CE hours offered will be posted before the start of the conference.

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

Registration

This leadership event is FREE for ONA members. Due to the nature of the schedule, members must attend both days of the event.

Conference registration deadline is Friday, Sept. 8. To register, visit the ONA website:

www.OregonRN.org