Nurses of Columbia Memorial Hospital to Picket

Informational picketers will rally public support, hand out information on August 20

ASTORIA, Ore. – August 5, 2019 – Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) nurses are holding an informational picket Tuesday, August 20 to raise public awareness of the difficulties they face in obtaining a fair contract with hospital administrators. Nurses at CMH have been working without a contract since May 31. The informational picket will be held on the sidewalks of Exchange Street and Highway 30 in front of CMH (211 Exchange St, Astoria) during three periods: 7-8 a.m., 12-1 p.m., and 4:30-6:30 p.m.

The hospital administration is compromising patient care by destabilizing our nursing workforce, leaving the hospital unable to properly recruit or retain nurses. Nurses have seen twice as many hours cut over the last six months, which means nurses can’t count on a consistent paycheck. The hospital also wants control of shift length and the ability to change shifts as they see fit, upending work-life balance for nurses and their families. Additionally, nurses want to see an increase in reimbursement for continuing education so they can provide the best standards of patient care. CMH is one of the most profitable hospitals in Oregon, running an operating margin of nearly 12 percent. Having a healthy reserve is necessary but few efforts have been made to decrease patient costs, improve protections around staffing levels, or provide wage parity and economic security to all nurses. In turn, this has made it almost impossible to recruit and retain high quality nurses the community deserves.

An informational picket is not a strike. Nurses and supporters will hold signs and provide information to the general public. Currently, there is no planned work stoppage. Columbia Memorial Hospital nurses and the administration are scheduled for another federal mediation session on August 14. The informational picket will be cancelled if a tentative contract agreement (TA) is reached before August 20. Nurses are asking community members to stop by the picket to show their support and to sign our community petition here.

About the Oregon Nurses Association

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is the state’s largest and most influential nursing organization. It is a professional association and labor union which represents nearly 15,000 nurses across the state. ONA’s mission is to advocate for nursing, quality health care and healthy communities. For more information visit www.OregonRN.org.

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