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## Nurses reach tentative contract agreement with Columbia Memorial Hospital

*Strong community support leads to successful contract*

**ASTORIA, Ore. – October 17, 2019** – Nurses at Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) successfully reached a tentative contract agreement with hospital administrators October 16. The agreement comes after seven months of negotiations, an informational picket, a community town hall and a rally supported by the Oregon AFL-CIO.

The 134 nurses at CMH are represented by the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA).

“We could not have reached this deal without the overwhelming support of our community,” said ONA negotiations chair Kelsey Betts, RN. “This contract is a big step up. It helps ensure CMH will continue to be staffed with skilled nurses, especially as the hospital looks to grow in the coming years.”

“As nurses, we are dedicated to our patients and their health. We began negotiations united, with clear goals to make changes so we can provide the best patient care on the North Coast,” said negotiations vice-chair Nicholas Bowling, RN. “We’re proud to say we accomplished that.”

Tentative agreement highlights:

**Protections of safe staffing levels** – additional steps will be put in place to resolve staffing issues in-house before filing complaints with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Nurses will have access to the union grievance procedure if these processes are not followed. Additionally, management will provide paid time for all nurses to be trained on the protections of the Oregon Nurse Staffing Law.

**Protections on scheduled hours/dock cap** – an official process will be put in place to review cases where part-time nurses’ scheduled hours are cut by more than 30 percent due to internal decisions of the hospital. Nurses can only be sent home 20 percent of their shifts per quarter at maximum, after that management must find them appropriate work. These safety nets mean nurses will now have the economic security to know they can pay their bills each month.

**Wages** – Upon ratification, nurses will receive a 5 percent pay increase, followed by a 3 percent raise in 2020 and a 3 percent raise in 2021. These pay increases will help with the retention and recruitment of nursing staff. Combined with step increases, most nurses will gain more than 18 percent in wage increases over the life of this new union agreement.

The ONA/CMH nurse negotiating team is recommending a “yes” vote on the contract agreement. Voting will be scheduled for the coming weeks. If approved, the new agreement will be effective immediately and run through May 31, 2022.

Nurses at CMH also extend an extra thank you to Sen. Jeff Merkley, Oregon State Commissioner of Labor and Industry Val Hoyle, Reps. Rachel Prusak, Tiffany Mitchell and Rob Nosse, former Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, and current Oregon AFL-CIO President Graham Trainor for their active support of local ONA nurses throughout this campaign.

### ***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](http://www.OregonRN.org).

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