Providence nurses from across Oregon were joined by local and state elected leaders, community allies and our union siblings in a show of support in front of Providence Portland Medical Center Friday, Feb. 5. Nurses and community allies showed up to deliver more than 1,500 commitment cards signed by ONA members to Providence executives and speak to the injustice of nurses entering the 12th month of a pandemic without a fair, comprehensive signed COVID-19 memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Providence executives declined our invitation to meet the nurses leading our card delegation and threatened legal action.

Our commitment cards were signed by you—nurses from across the state—in support of our COVID-19 Bill of Rights which summarizes the fair and reasonable COVID-19 safety measures that are detailed in the COVID-19 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)—an addendum to our contract that has been proposed for months. The initial agreement with Providence expired in May 2020, and since that time, Providence has refused to sign a long-term agreement to provide continued protection and safety for the nurses providing care for our communities.

Providence’s decision to continue ignoring nurses’ voices has been unfathomable to the majority of ONA nurses working in the Providence Health System and has given rise to our Protect People not Profits Campaign—where we continue the fight to receive basic industry-standard protections in writing—the same type of protections other Oregon hospitals willingly provide.

Providence’s refusal to sign a fair COVID-19 agreement flies in the face of Providence’s stated mission and core values as established by the Sister’s of Providence many years ago.

Its increasingly stubborn and unreasonable stance is resulting in critical press and publicity across local, regional, and national television and print media and more and more community members speaking out in support of nurses.

While Providence claims to have responded to many of the requests in our ONA nurse-led MOU, they have partially responded to some only after months of pressure from nurses, and completely ignored others.

Simply stated we are asking for a long term COVID-19 safety agreement that meets nurses’ and community members’ demands including adequate personal protection equipment (PPE), timely exposure notifications, regular access to COVID-19 tests, pandemic leave from day one and a workers compensation presumption for COVID-19.

It’s time for Providence to step up and act in a way that is congruent with who they say they are, by signing our MOU and supporting ONA nurses’ COVID-19 Bill of Rights.
We have sacrificed to provide health care and support to our communities throughout this pandemic. For the past nine months, we have worked without a safety net. It’s time for that to change.

Missed the event? Check out photos and video of the event and SHARE to show your support!

Facebook Live Video
Facebook Photo Gallery
Twitter

Finally, we owe a debt of gratitude to the community allies who came out to support our card delivery. Multnomah County Commissioner Sharon Meieran, MD; Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson; State Representative Winsvey Campos; Oregon AFL/CIO President Graham Trainor; Portland Jobs with Justice; and members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8. We must also thank the television stations and print media who came out to cover the event and publicize our struggle.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Bargaining Update

Providence has continued to make no movement to extend basic COVID-19 protections for nurses. The key difference between our most recent proposal and theirs is that we have asked for 40-hours of additional paid time off (PTO) to be used for COVID-19 related illness. This PTO could be used for one’s own or family illness, exposure quarantine and extended illness from vaccination and would be retroactive. This was the highest priority for our nurses and team.

Providence has refused this request and instead requires nurses to use their own PTO for the first seven days of illness unless a nurse can prove they contracted COVID-19 from work. We have also asked for weekly testing and workers compensation presumptions for COVID-19 illness. Providence has continued to refuse these demands as well.

So what’s next?
Providence on Trial: Jobs With Justice to Lead Public Workers’ Rights Board, March 10

Portland Jobs with Justice is hosting a statewide Workers’ Rights Board public forum about Providence’s failures to protect nurses and patients Wed., March 10. It is being led by the Jobs with Justice Workers’ Rights Board which heard testimony from ONA nurses at Providence facilities in January.

On Jan. 19, a broad panel of elected officials, academics, legal and faith leaders came together to hear startling firsthand accounts of the serious health and safety problems nurses were continually experiencing and that Providence had failed to address. These community leaders called on Providence to promptly negotiate a fair agreement with us or they would call a broader public Workers’ Rights Board and invite community members throughout Oregon, the media, elected officials and business leaders to judge Providence for its transgressions against nurses and other frontline health care workers.

Given Providence’s failure to sign a fair comprehensive COVID-19 safety agreement, Jobs with Justice has scheduled this massive public virtual forum for Wednesday, March 10 at 6:30 p.m.

We need you to be there and invite everyone you can! Families, friends, neighbors, acquaintances are all welcome to join and hear directly from frontline nurses about the protections and support we need to be safe and protect our community.

We will share an event signup link in the coming days. Please block your calendars now and join us and Oregonians across the state as we put Providence on trial and make our case to the public that Providence must do what is right and sign a COVID-19 safety agreement to protect nurses, our patients and our community!

SAVE THE DATE

Jobs with Justice Workers’ Rights Board Public Forum
Protect Us, Protect Our Community
Providence Nurses Briefing Virtual Hearing
Date: Wednesday, March 10
Time: 6:30 p.m.

ACTION ALERT: Sign to Support your Nurse Colleagues at Providence Medford

Click the link to sign the petition today!

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-medford-nurses?source=direct_link&

Your nurse colleagues at Providence Medford Medical Center (PMMC) are fighting for a fair contract. We need your support because this is a shared struggle. Listen to what nurses at PMMC have experienced.

ONA nurses at PMMC:

• Have been furloughed and low censused, forced to burn vacation time or lose pay and/or been denied unemployment benefits or lost in an antiquated unemployment system.

• When the census, acuity, and patient volumes are high, we frequently work short under more stressful circumstances. We skip breaks and are asked to work extra and stay late.

continued on page 4
• Have received no hazard compensation, in fact not even received a cost of living adjustment for over one and a half years, despite working in hazardous conditions as essential workers.

• Have spent more time exposed to and caring for COVID patients than any other essential healthcare worker at PMMC.

• Have shouldered the burden of working in hazardous conditions and exposing our families to COVID-19 while trying to homeschool our children.

• Have been exposed and/or contracted COVID-19 only to have wildly varied experiences with employee health. Delayed, disorganized or denied testing. Not placed on paid leave and forced to use PTO and sick time. Billed for COVID-19 tests. Told to work under “emergency staffing” guidelines. Denied workers comp, placed on varied quarantine times. All without regard for the emotional stress placed on nurses and their families or further potential exposure to coworkers.

Sound familiar? Providence is refusing to support and protect nurses throughout Oregon to preservice its $12 billion in investments and reserves. This is why we’re coming together. To fight back.

Just as we support our joint fight for a COVID-19 safety agreement, we must support our fellow ONA members across the state who are experiencing the same problems we are.

Working together in solidarity is how we raise staffing, safety and workplace standards and win fair local contracts, statewide safety protections and more.

Nurses at Providence Medford are heading into mediation Friday, Feb. 26. Sign the petition to show your support today!

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-medford-nurses?source=direct_link&

ONA nurses at Providence Home Health & Hospice are standing up for our patients and themselves by rejecting Providence’s attempts to impose much higher patient care loads designed to meet arbitrarily increased productivity standards.

Home Health & Hospice nurses typically work under productivity standards which define the average number of visits a nurse should complete per day. These productivity standards often fail to include consideration of patient acuity, non-billable visits and time spent preparing, driving, charting, and communicating with the patient’s primary care provider.

For these reasons, nurses were struggling to meet...
high productivity standards even before Providence attempted to dramatically increase productivity standards and patient care loads in Jan. 2021.

The new productivity standards place additional pressure on nurses who have been pushed to their limits by the COVID-19 pandemic, now entering its twelfth month. For some nurses, especially mental health and palliative care nurses, the new productivity standards would nearly double their daily patient care load. Nurses have described the toll these new standards have taken on their mental health as they strive to carry higher patient care loads while ensuring quality patient care.

For one of our nurse colleagues, the stress of Portland’s recent winter storm was exacerbated when the time she spent digging her car out at a patient’s house counted against her productivity.

Nurses have been clear that what we need is more nurses and more support, not unrealistic mandates to do more with less. To fight for safe staffing and a halt to unrealistic productivity standards, nurses have filed a class action grievance, demanded to bargain and taken collective action.

Seventy-five percent of Home Health nurses signed a petition calling on Providence to rescind the new standards and ensure safe staffing. We are taking a stand by refusing unsafe patient loads and filing Staffing Request and Documentation Forms (SRDFs) to document the unsafe practice of assigning excessive patient care loads. As we head to the bargaining table to head off these unrealistic productivity standards, Providence Home Health & Hospice nurses will call on nurses across the Providence system to join us and help fight back!

We are pleased to announce Rebecca Cooper has accepted ONA’s Strategic Campaign Manager position to work with ONA’s Providence team. Rebecca will add capacity and provide coordination for our staff team and build relationships with our Providence bargaining unit leaders to advance our systemwide work. We know both the staff and member leaders are anxious to take a deeper dive into campaign planning for both short and long-term goals. Rebecca will help make that happen.

Rebecca brings wide and deep labor movement experience to this work. She has spent years developing skills and expertise in collective bargaining and contract enforcement. She has also been an organizer for first contracts. She has led and trained others to perform strategic corporate research as well as having a wealth of experience in advocacy, labor and electoral campaigns ranging from Washington DC to Oregon and Washington State.

Our systemwide Providence campaign is a big step for ONA. We have an outstanding track record with bargaining unit work and have wanted to build on that power base to execute coordinated campaigns throughout the entire Providence Oregon system for a long time. Rebecca’s experience with pattern bargaining campaigns will help us take our next steps.

Rebecca will start on Monday, March 15, the same day as ONA’s new Director of Labor, Martí Garza.

Martí has more than a decade of experience as a lead organizer, strategic campaigner and contract negotiator. His experience leading comprehensive campaigns for economic justice with union members in health care and education will also benefit our team as we move forward together.
Nurses Charged for COVID-19 Related Employee Health Visits

There have been several reports of nurses who have been charged significant amounts after being referred to Providence’s Employee Health Dept. for COVID-19 related issues (symptoms, quarantine, etc.). These charges are inappropriate and should be reversed. If you or someone you know has been charged for this type of visit, please contact your Labor Representative or one of your local ONA nurse officers to let us know so the charges can be reversed.

Develop your skills to build a stronger union.

ONA stewards are the lifeblood of what makes our union strong. A strong union has at least one steward for every unit and shift. Stewards are there to answer colleague’s questions and discuss concerns and help keep every nurse up to date on important union activities.

We will offer three, rotating trainings in 2021. Introductory steward training focuses on representing your coworkers and problem-solving workplace issues. Grievance handling covers identifying, filing and following up on contract grievance. Building worksite power stresses how to build your union and create an environment that results in improvements for nurses.

Find the training that works best for you!

Space is limited so register today at:

www.OregonRN.org/Steward-Training

Schedule of Available Trainings & Topics

Introductory Steward Training
- Saturday, April 17, 2021
- Saturday, June 19, 2021
- Tuesday, September 21, 2021
- Thursday, December 9, 2021

Grievance Handling Training
- Wednesday, May 19, 2021
- Thursday, July 22, 2021
- Saturday, October 9, 2021

Building Worksite Power Training
- Tuesday, March 16, 2021
- Saturday, August 7, 2021
- Wednesday, November 10, 2021