More than 200 ONA Providence nurses, community and labor allies, and supportive politicians rallied last Friday, January 20 at Providence corporate headquarters demanding that Providence protect nurses. Nurse leaders Lori Curtis, Jamie Canales, Richard Botterill, Virginia Smith, and Allison Seymour reiterated the demands we have been making at our open bargaining tables: safe staffing, fully paid family and medical leave, fair market compensation, and improved health benefits. As Providence Home Health and Hospice ONA Chair Jame Canales made clear, “Nurses thrive when we are able to provide excellent care, but we cannot provide that care when our employer refuses to commit to fair contracts.”

Almost 2,000 ONA nurses at Providence Portland Medical Center, Providence Home Health & Hospice, and Providence Seaside are at the bargaining table and working under expired contracts. Nurses from Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Providence Newberg Medical Center, and Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center will return to the bargaining table later this year. With almost 4,000 nurses bargaining six open contracts—plus a legislative session where we are working to secure legally mandated and enforceable minimum staffing standards—2023 offers an unprecedented opportunity to change our profession and improve care for Oregonians. Friday’s rally is just the beginning of that effort.
Our rally also highlighted Providence’s most recent divestment from care: the announced closure of the ProvRN Advice Line, a critical service provided by ONA Providence nurses. The closure of the ProvRN Advice Line is an apparent repudiation of the coordinated care model and threatens to worsen already critical overcrowding in ERs. ONA is negotiating with Providence over the closure and demanding a just transition for impacted nurses.

As the ProvRN Advice Line closure clearly demonstrates, Providence continues to care more about its bottomline than the frontline. Fortunately, we are joined in our efforts to save a failing health care system by community, labor, and political allies. Members of Portland Jobs with Justice, Portland Democratic Socialists of America, Oregon AFL-CIO (including several OFNHP-represented Kaiser nurses), and political allies all showed up and spoke out at our rally. Particular thanks go to Oregon Labor Commissioner Christina Stephenson, Reverend David Wheeler (JWJ), and Erica Thomas (DSA) for adding their voices.

We need every ONA Providence nurse engaged in this effort

To help us win our staffing legislation, visit SafeStaffingSavesLives.com and get involved in the effort at oregonrn.org/GetInvolved.

To secure a strong contract, join your Contract Action Team by contacting your ONA Labor Representative or Bargaining Unit Chair.

Selection of Media From Our Rally:
https://www.thelundreport.org/content/nurses-union-holds-rally-pressuring-providence-pay-staffing