We met with administration for our eighth bargaining session on Thursday, March 21. Nurses wore “Work Safe, Not Sick” buttons to show their solidarity with our bargaining team!

Management did not respond to our last proposal on the extended illness time (EIT) takeaway, which was where we rejected their proposal. The vast majority of our respondents to our EIT survey said that management’s proposed short-term disability (STD) program, which would eventually replace EIT, would be a disadvantage to them.

Here is what we worked on. Both parties wrote counterproposals on:

- Article 4 - Rights of Management. Our main difference is what type of issue qualifies for an unpaid suspension.

- Article 7 - Employment Status. Our main differences are what type of nursing standard violations would disqualify a nurse for a two-week severance, and about placing documentation into a nurse’s file without their knowledge.

- Article 8 - Hours of Work. Our main differences are around combining breaks, daily overtime, no mandatory low census, and some contradictory language on schedule changes and open shifts being designated as incentive shifts. While it may sound like we are far apart here, this is a long article and we have made headway in several areas.

- Article 10 - Other Conditions. Our main difference is regarding harassment investigations. We proposed the language that we had in the 2014-2016 contract, where the hospital would communicate the findings to the nurse who was subject to the alleged bullying behavior.

While we made some headway on some of the articles, we did not come to a tentative agreement on anything yesterday. The area where we made the most progress was in hours of work, where management agreed to allow a nurse up to ten scheduled days off.
without the use of paid time off within a six-week schedule.

In addition, we wrote counterproposals on:

- **Article 11 - Professional Nurse Care Committee.** Our main difference is how many nurses are allowed on the committee. Management would like three, while we are advocating for four.

- **Article 17 - Education.** Our main difference here is regarding having a voluntary cross-training program. This is very important as it pairs with our no mandatory low census proposal.

We are looking at April 17 as our next bargaining session where we would have the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service mediator help us settle the contract. This date isn’t confirmed yet. Providence Portland Medical Center is bargaining on March 22, 25 and 26. We hope they are able to make headway on the EIT issues so they can pave the path for us to settle a fair, strong contract!

In the meantime, please continue wearing your “Work Safe, Not Sick” buttons *every day you work*. If you need a button, please reach out to one of your bargaining team members.

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**Know Your Rights: Wearing ONA Buttons at Work**

**Q:** Are we allowed to wear ONA buttons at work?

**A:** Yes. By law, you are allowed to wear union buttons while on duty. People wear lanyards, stickers, photos, and pins that have personal, religious, and sports messages –union buttons are no different.

**Q:** Can management discipline me for wearing an ONA button?

**A:** No. It is illegal for management to punish employees for wearing buttons in support of ONA or issues that we are working on as a union. Employees are protected by the National Labor Relations Act’s (NLRA) “Protected Concerted Activities” clause.

**Q:** What do I do if management asks that I remove my button?

**A:** It is illegal for management to ask nurses to remove their ONA buttons. If a manager does ask you this, notify him/her that you have the right to wear your button/sticker at all times during your shift. Report details of any management/supervisor request to an ONA representative (officer, bargaining team member or ONA Labor Relations Representative) immediately.

**Q:** Can I wear my button in patient care areas?

**A:** Yes. Employees have the right to wear their ONA buttons visibly. Should a manager ask you to remove your ONA button while in front of patients, notify him/her that you have the right to visibly wear your ONA button/sticker at all times during your shift. Report to an ONA representative if a manager or supervisor has any conversation with you about it.

**Q:** What do I answer when patients or their families ask about the button?

**A:** The truth: that we are in contract bargaining and we want ensure that we maintain fair wages, benefits, working conditions for nurses and that we can continue to give our patients the best care possible.

**Q:** Where can I get more information about how the law protects employees?

**A:** The National Labor Relation Board’s website covers all the laws that protect employees engaging in union activities. You can find more details at www.nlrb.gov/workplace_rights/.