On May 15, 2020 the Rogue Regional Medical Center (RRMC) Hospice nurses received a letter from hospital leadership that effective May 24, 2020 they would no longer be represented by Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) based primarily on the change in location of the Hospice office.

The nurses and ONA staff worked quickly to challenge the authority for the hospital to make a unilateral decision of this magnitude. On Monday, May 18 we clarified that such a change was in fact a violation of our contract, as well as a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. We also provided bargaining history to the hospital leadership to support our assertion.

On the morning of Tuesday, May 19, we received information that the hospital leadership had decided to rescind the action. A letter was sent to the Hospice nurses clarifying that there would be no change to their bargaining unit membership at this time.

Later in the day, Mick Zdeblic, RRMC CEO, met with the Hospice department via Zoom. Mr. Zdeblic expressed his sincere apology for the pain and anxiety created by the letter and affirmed his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the amazing work the department has done and continues to do for the community. When asked directly by Holly Freeman, RN, a 26-year Hospice nurse, if he would guarantee that the hospital would not propose at the negotiation table to remove the Hospice nurses from ONA representation, Mr. Zdeblic said “No, I cannot make that guarantee”.

The nurses were relieved that the proposed change would not be effective at this time and angry that there was no commitment to not create similar stress and anxiety in the near future.

Mr. Zdeblic asked that another meeting be scheduled with the Hospice department for Wednesday, May 20. At that meeting Mr. Zdeblic shared that he appreciated the honest and direct feedback from the staff and that he had contemplated the events of the previous few days. He then declared he wanted to share directly with the staff “You have my word; we will not be presenting any proposals to eliminate the Hospice nurses from the RRMC ONA bargaining unit at the negotiation table”.

The nurses expressed appreciation for the decision and for Mr. Zdeblic’s transparency and acknowledgement of responsibility for the chaos the previous decision had caused.

This was a great example of how when we stand together as one we can achieve success.

This group of nurses is now more engaged than ever to maintain the success we have as a strong bargaining unit.

Thank you to all of the Hospice nurses for your strength and activism.
Negotiations Start on Tuesday, May 26!

Our negotiation teams will meet in person and virtually on Tuesday, May 26 for our first negotiation session. We are working on a process to ensure that bargaining unit members will be allowed to observe from a virtual format. The process will likely require advance notice of plans to attend so that we can send the invitations. We may not have this process fully ready for the meeting on Tuesday. We will have a full recap of events in a bargaining update as soon as possible via email, on theONA RRMC webpage and Facebook page.

We have agreed to extend the current contract through July 31, 2020.

We are all looking forward to the normal style of negotiations as soon as possible.

Do you have questions? Contact Susan Bruce at Bruce@Oregonrn.org

We have negotiation dates scheduled for:
- Tuesday, 5/26/20
- Tuesday, 6/9/20
- Monday, 6/22/20
- Monday, 7/6/20
- Monday, 7/27/20

Our location for negotiation is:
Hilton Garden Inn,
1000 Welcome Way, Medford

ASI/CNI Grievance Update

ASI/CNI nurses placed on standby while travelers work.

An Association grievance was filed at step 2 of the process on May 1, 2020 to address a violation of Exhibit A 11. 7 and Articles 8.1 of our collective bargaining agreement. The violation that has occurred and continues to occur is when nurses who have signed up for ASI or CNI are placed on “standby” and travelers are allowed to work those shifts. That practice is in violation of the contract starts in A.11.7.

A.11 Incentive Shifts.
7. Nurses on ASI-7 or CNI Shifts will be designated for first call off before regularly scheduled RNs, and paid the shift incentive for all hours worked.

The hospital does not “call off” nurses on incentive shifts. They place them on “scheduling standby”. The hospital in discussions has said “there is no clear definition of what “called off” means.”

Nurses on ASI or CNI shifts are the first to be placed on “mandatory staffing standby” with no right of refusal for that shift or standby assignment.

Article 8.1 dictates a specific order in which nurses will be placed on mandatory staffing standby.

8.1 Short-Term Layoff/Staffing Standby.
These are adjustments that are made for low census, or other temporary adjustments of less than twenty-one (21) out of every thirty (30) calendar days in a work unit. A short-term layoff/Staffing Standby will occur in the following order:
A. Volunteers from the shift and work unit.
B. Agency and traveler nurses within the Staffing Standby unit or its buddy unit.
C. Short-hour nurses from the shift and work unit in the following order:
   1. Temporary (Code 3T) and On Call (Code 3O)
   2. Bid (Code 3B)
D. Regular status nurses (Codes 1 and 2), from the shift and work unit.

The hospital response was that they have been using the same process for years and disagree that the process has been in violation of the contract.

We notified the hospital on May 11, 2020 that we will be moving this grievance to the ONA EGW Cabinet for approval to move forward with the Arbitration process.

If you have been placed on “standby” while a traveler, have worked in your unit or buddy unit please email your contact information and dates of occurrence to Susan Bruce at Bruce@Oregonrn.org.