On Friday, May 18, our Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) negotiating team met with nursing administration to negotiate terms of the proposed RiverBend reorganization. We started the day with several presentations about the value of the Discharge and Resource Nurse positions. Nicole Brooks, Resource Nurse 8 Medical; Angela Yecke, Discharge Nurse Oncology, and Kristi Trusler, Discharge Nurse 8 Medical, did an excellent job of presenting information about the value of their positions and read some of the hundreds of comments that have been shared by their colleagues. A delegation of hospitalists also came to negotiations to present a stack of letters of support for both of these positions. More letters of support from nurses, techs and other physicians were presented to the management team as well. We also reviewed data that showed these nurses make a difference in timely discharges and decreased length of stay. There is an amazing level of support for these positions and we hope the hospital team will reconsider its proposed elimination of these nurses’ jobs!

The survey results were the next topic of discussion. (See article page 2 “Survey Results are In!” for more details). The survey results were strong—we had a huge turnout in a short timeframe and it is clear a majority of the nurses do not want to work 12-hour shifts. Nurses also indicated a high level of support for the Resource and Discharge Nurses and shared concerns about changes to Charge Nurse positions. Woven through all of the responses was concern for loss of good

Continued on page 2
Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC) and Sacred Heart Home Care Services (SHHCS)

**Update on RiverBend Reorg Negotiations**  
continued from page 1

skilled nurses and patient and staff safety due to fatigue related to long work hours.

There is a small percentage of nurses that do not work 12-hour shifts currently and would be excited to be able to have an alternate shift length (51 of the respondents or 9.39 percent). Our ONA Executive Team is prepared to discuss how to create more opportunities for these nurses while protecting the interests of those that prefer 8-hour shifts. One wrinkle is that many of the nurses that said they wanted 12-hour shifts, did not want them if they could not get the shift or FTE of their choice.

After review of the survey, the team presented our response to administration’s proposals. Included in our response were questions about their desire to debate the length of time required by the contract for the negotiations. Our team repeated the magnitude of this proposal and asked that we take the time needed to do it right.

The administration team took a long caucus and came back stating their disappointment that we had not agreed to any of their proposals. We had hoped that providing information about how the nurses felt about their proposals might cause them to rethink their positions.

ONA Executive Team members plan on presenting evidenced-based research at the next bargaining session about the potential harms in 12-hour shifts for patient and nurse safety.

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**Survey Results are In – 80% Participation!**

Thanks to all who participated in the survey regarding the proposed Reorganization of RiverBend units. We had 559 RiverBend nurses participate in the survey which is approximately 80 percent of the nurses that will be impacted by these proposals. And, all of that was done in 10 days!

The full survey results are posted online, but here are some of the highlights:

- Most nurses do not want to work 12-hour shifts. Seventy percent of the nurses that participated said they would not want to work 12-hour shifts; 28 percent said that 12-hour shifts work well for them or they would be excited to try them (this includes some nurses who already work twelves) and 2 percent were neutral on the topic.
- We asked, “If you have concerns about moving to 12-hour shifts, what are they?” The number one response was “Fatigue and how it will affect patient safety and quality of care.” Sixty-four percent of the nurses that responded to the question, selected that response. The next highest concerns were “Work/life balance – I would have to work longer days, which I believe will negatively impact my family/life”; “Fatigue and how it will affect my life outside of work”; “Fatigue and how it will affect my health” – those three responses tied with 60 percent. People also shared concerns about child care availability and costs for that care covering the 13.5-14 hours needed if they worked 12-hour shifts.
- Another concern was what would happen if the reorg caused them to have to move to a shift they did not want, loss of hours resulting in less pay and higher health care costs. Forty percent of the nurses that participated stated they would leave PeaceHealth to get the shift, shift length and FTE that they needed with 33 percent saying that they would take any position to stay in their current unit.
- Eighty percent of nurses stated that they believe SHMC should permanently retain a percentage of 8-hour shifts so that nurses have more options as they age or their life situations change.

We shared the survey results about the Resource and Discharge Nurse positions with administration which showed that there was overwhelming support for these positions. For the loss of resource nurse positions the top three concerns were: negative impact on nurses’ ability to get their meal and break coverage; negative impact on patient safety and reduced mentoring for new nurses. The top three concerns raised about eliminating the discharge nurses were negative impact on timely

Continued on page 3
Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC) and Sacred Heart Home Care Services (SHHCS) discharges, negative impact on patient satisfaction; and loss of consistency and expertise. We will be sharing the survey results about the proposed changes to the Charge Nurse positions in our next newsletter and at the next bargaining session.

**Next steps:** Next Negotiation Session, Tuesday, June 12; 12:30-5 p.m. at RiverBend, location TBD. The agenda will include a discussion about evidence of the harmful impact of long shifts on health care workers, the Charge Nurse proposals, continued discussion of the percentage proposal on 12-hour shifts and continued discussion regarding the Resource and Discharge Nurse positions. We encourage nurses to wear black to show your solidarity!

**Survey Results are In – 80% Participation!**

**ONA Nurses Week Celebrations Were A Success!**

We held three events celebrating the awesome nurses at Sacred Heart!

At University District, we did rounds and distributed food, raffle prizes and ONA “bling” to the units during all three shifts. Kevyn Paul, ONA Executive Committee, took care of the shopping and logistics to make sure we put together well-deserved treats for our members!

The ONA Home Care Executive Committee hosted a breakfast and had great attendance. It was nice weather so we held the event outside in the courtyard and nurses enjoyed great food and raffle prizes.
ONa Nurses Week Celebrations Were A Success!  

The RiverBend event had record numbers of nurses attending with approximately 400 nurses dropping in throughout the day. We had stations set up for nurses to take the Reorganization Survey and the Professional Nursing Care Committee (PNCC) had a table to recruit new members and talk about what the PNCC has done and can do with more active participation from nurses. Nicole Cantu, ONA professional practice consultant, was there offering nurses individual consultation on unit staffing plans as well as providing handouts about best practices for staffing plans. Catie Thiesen, ONA political organizer, invited elected officials and many of them were able to attend including Senator James Manning, Senator Lee Beyer, Representative Nancy Nathanson, Representative John Lively, and Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinnis. ONA endorsed candidates Kimberly Koops and Val Hoyle also came out to meet nurses and hear what is happening with nursing in the community. ONA’s new Chief Executive, Martin Taylor, came to meet our members and was impressed by the turnout and enthusiasm of the nurses that came to the event. Special thanks to Jessica Gideon, 7 Surgical for all her work in getting donations for the raffle, setting up the prize table and getting the raffle prizes delivered. And, thanks to Supradtana Pigromsuk Valente (aka Nile) for jumping in after working all night, to help out with the drawings! We want to thank everyone that helped with these events – it takes a lot of work to put all of this together. And, thanks again to those that attended!

Hospitalists Need Your Support in Pushing Back Against Subcontracting

As members of the Pacific Northwest Hospital Medicine Association face tough negotiations with Sacred Heart, nurses as well as members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have been signing pledge cards to show their support. The hospitalists should be close to reaching an agreement on their new contract but the Medical Center’s insistence on including subcontracting language has brought the negotiations close to a stalemate. The proposed subcontracting language would give PeaceHealth wide latitude to outsource the doctors without providing any protection for current union members. This could allow the Medical Center to replace the entire bargaining unit with outsourced contracted staff. This would not be good for our patients or our community! The next mediation session is scheduled for June 26. The support of nurses and other staff in the hospital for the doctors will be important in helping them push back on this proposal. Keep an eye out for updates on ways you can show up to support these union members.

Birth Center Organizing Update

A letter from Nurses and Nurse Midwives of the Nurse Midwifery Birth Center

Last month during the National Labor Relations Board process, PeaceHealth refused to agree to us joining our colleagues in the ONA Sacred Heart Medical Center bargaining unit. Instead, they insisted that we organize and join a new bargaining unit of PeaceHealth clinics. On April 9, the registered nurses and certified nurse midwives chose to voluntarily withdraw our petition to unionize. Despite this difficult decision, we remain committed to addressing recent changes that have negatively impacted our working conditions and the quality of care we provide our patients. At the beginning of this month, we mailed a follow up letter to members of PeaceHealth’s HR and administration who we have been meeting with to address our concerns. This letter highlighted our continuing priorities around:

- Excellent care to women and newborns at the hospital and the birth center
- A safe and respectful work environment
- Adequate staffing
- Transparency and accountability
- Due process for any nurse midwife or nurse whose job is threatened

We are disappointed that we were unable to have a chance to vote to join our ONA colleagues. But we will continue to work to address these key issues as they are factors which hurt our ability to recruit and retain qualified staff.

In solidarity, the Nurses and Nurse Midwifery Birth Center