Your SHMC-ONA executive committee held a socially distant planning retreat on Oct. 3 to set goals for the next two years with an eye towards the next contract negotiations in 2023. After reviewing successes of the past two years (strong nurse staffing committee, creation of meal/break nurse positions, Cultural Transformation Committee (CTC) formation) the team looked ahead to focus on future efforts both in the short and long term.

One major area of concern that was identified was bully bosses. The CTC and Chief Nursing officer Heather Wall are dedicated and committed to improving culture at Sacred Heart.

The executive committee recognizes that some departments have been experiencing this ongoing issue and believe that managers and other supervisors need to be held accountable when they use harassment and bullying to intimidate nurses.

With the help of the PNCC’s Staffing Request & Documentation Form (SRDF) analysis we can help identify recurring issues including units that are experiencing this type of problem. The executive committee plans to create a template for working with nurses to hold management accountable for bad behavior.

The executive committee is also committed to supporting an effort to recruit more stewards and re-energize the steward council. Nancy Deyhle (ICU), executive committee member and nurse staffing committee co-chair, is taking a release-time position with ONA and will be working as the steward council captain spearheading this effort.

The plan is to identify and recruit stewards from those units without one, work to get a steward on all shifts, and provide training and support to all stewards. This will include educating
Planning for the Future  
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more veteran stewards on the basics of filing and handling grievances. The goal is to have at least one steward on every unit and shift within the next six months. It’s a big goal but one worth striving for. Every unit needs someone nurses can trust to help figure out contract questions or speak up for nurses and make sure they are being treated fairly. If you are interested in learning more about what it means to be a steward please contact ONA labor rep Laura Lay at Lay@OregonRN.org.

The committee also decided to form an Internal Communications Committee to help create better connection between the executive team and nurses across both campuses. See the invitation from your union president Chris Rompala (OR) below for more information.

Executive committee members: Wendy Nau, Kevyn Paul, Jennifer Fain, Jessica Dettering, Lisa Diriwachter, Chris Rompola, Nancy Deyhle

Invitation to Join Internal Communications Committee

Hey Nurses! Have you been wanting to get more involved with your union, but unsure how?

We are looking for a few members to help us jump start the Internal Communications Committee! This group will assist with our ONA newsletters, distributing info to our members, and making sure we have clear lines of communication house wide.

If you have any questions/interest in joining please let me know. Shoot me a Facebook message or email to Crompala@gmail.com.

COVID Agreement Update

Your ONA SHMC executive committee negotiated an agreement with PeaceHealth to get us through the first few months of the pandemic. Now we are working on a second agreement to reflect the new conditions we find ourselves in. We have held two negotiation sessions and have a third one scheduled for Nov. 6. Here are some of the highlights of what we are seeking in this updated agreement:

- We want to get updates on everything COVID-related every other week so we can ensure patients and staff are safe. We want those updates to include PPE supplies, number of infected patients and staff, PeaceHealth policy updates, and COVID unit staffing.
- Nurses should know when they have likely been exposed.
- We feel that the COVID Sick Bank should be replenished so that nurses don’t have to lose pay when they have COVID symptoms.
- Extra space should be made available for meals and breaks, and extra time should be provided to get to the spaces.
- Assignment to the COVID unit should be done on a volunteer basis using staff that have been properly oriented.
- Education hours and funds should be rolled over so nurses have time to take them should they be canceled or postponed due to COVID-19.
- Members with childcare issues caused by COVID-19 should be allowed to request Per Diem positions be posted on their unit and shift.

We believe that all of these proposals are reasonable because we now know getting through this pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to stay healthy and strong for the duration of the pandemic, not rely on quick fixes. These proposals can get us across the finish line. Your support can help us get the agreement we need to last.
Update on Flu Vaccine Declination Process

PeaceHealth created a lot of confusion recently in their communications about the seasonal flu vaccine. ONA wants to assure you that you have the right to decline the vaccine and do not need a medical reason to do so.

We recently received updated information on how you can register your declination if you do not want to get the vaccine. A link to the declination form can be found by clicking on the “Flu Vaccinations!” tile shown on photo that is found on Crossroads.

ONA Gets Assurances About Safety Absolute Policy

Your SHMC-ONA executive committee was very concerned when PeaceHealth issued their Safety Absolute policy in August.

On its face, the new policy violated the progressive discipline provisions of your collective bargaining agreement. Referencing adherence to both the Patient Look Up and Patient Identification policies, the Safety Absolute policy states “the first confirmed violation of a Safety Absolute will result in a minimum of a step 3: Final Written Warning. Any future confirmed violations will result in termination.”

Starting at step 3 for a corrective action has typically only been done in very egregious cases involving potential patient harm or similar serious circumstances.

To announce this would automatically be the level of discipline under this policy was a change in practice and inconsistent with the your contract provisions. We also had concerns about how investigations would be conducted of potential violations of those policies.

ONA issued a demand to bargain with PeaceHealth and met twice to discuss the matter. We were able to get assurance in writing that all cases involving a violation of the Patient Look up or Patient Identification policy would be reviewed using the Just Culture algorithm and investigated fairly.

The Just Culture algorithm is a tool used by management to guide discipline decisions. While it is not always applied properly in ONA’s view, when it is used correctly it does help ensure that extenuating circumstances and other factors will be considered when a manager is determining a level of discipline.

This is just one more area that your ONA executive committee has been looking out for you and defending your contract.

As a reminder: If you are ever issued a discipline please consult with your steward or ONA Labor rep so that we can help review the discipline to be sure it is fair and accurate, and to be sure it is an appropriate level of discipline.

Labor & Delivery “Reorg” Process Update

The Labor and Delivery unit held a vote to seat members for an ad hoc committee that will work with management to develop and a trial scheduling solution for the unit.

This is in leu of a reorganization that ONA and the nurses on the unit pushed back on in September.

Nurses on the unit nominated and then voted on a slate of worthy candidates to represent their interests on the committee. It was a competitive election with seven nurses vying for five positions.

The nurses selected to serve on the committee are Jessica Brand, Donna McVay, Jessica Pitrolo, Angela
Roberts, and Sahara Waddell. These nurses will work with the unit managers to figure out how to balance the schedule and ensure safe staffing for the unit.

They will also consult with the other nurses on the unit for their input into possible solutions for their unit’s staffing challenges.

Thank you to these nurses, and the others who ran for election, for being willing to step up and do this important work for your unit.

The Culture Transformation Committee (CTC) was formed about a year ago because of reports of systemic bullying and incivility that were identified by the Professional Nurse Care Committee (PNCC) review of SRDFs. The creation of the CTC was a direct result of the PNCC analyzing months of SRDF’s that bedside nurses submitted documenting unsafe staffing ratios, missed meals and breaks, serious concern for the well-being of patients and fear for the safety of their nursing license. As we dove deeper into this problem it quickly became apparent that these unfortunate situations had a common theme. There was a culture of using intimidation to maintain high volume and low-cost daily operations at Peace Health facilities. The SRDFs told the story.

When Chief Nursing officer, Heather Wall, investigated the report created by the PNCC, she quickly recognized the problem and proposed the formation of this council. The CTC is composed of bedside nurses, professional practice leaders, nurse leaders from a multitude of units though out the hospital along with human resources and representation by ONA. Heather also serves on the committee. We are grateful for her leadership and commitment to improve the level of the nursing practice. The CTC meets about every two weeks as it works on ways to tackle bullying, incivility and improve the workplace culture at the hospital. As you can imagine this is a major project that requires great insight and dedication. The committee is filled with passionate people who have a strong desire to make Riverbend and University District the best hospitals in the nation to work in.

The CTC’s goal is to have made enough of a difference at this point that if you take a moment to reflect you will have noticed a difference; that things have started to change for the better. But we have more work to do and we will soon be rolling out hospital wide reports on our progress, training for leaders and caregivers, and systems for reporting and eradicating bullying all across our workplace.

This committee has worked hard over the past year to agree on our meeting process and set our agenda. Members have brought great ideas and efforts to the forefront, but this will all be in vain if we do not change the culture in every unit on both campuses. This committee cannot change the culture alone. Management and HR cannot change the culture alone. It will take every single employee to truly want to change the culture. We ask that you join with us to try to bring your best self forward with your interactions with others while at work. We ask that you become a leader for change. Can you agree to do your part to make our hospital better? If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to a member of the CTC. And please keep filling out those SRDF’s. They were the spark that initiated this important work and are still incredibly important to helping us identifying areas in need of improvement.

Jennifer Fain
PNCC Chair