ONASAO Negotiation Team:
- Sam Claudio (CCU)
- Chris Knosp (Day Surgery)
- Teresa Wilson (CCU)
- Diana Godinez (Med/Surg)
- Hallie Scott (CCU)
- Julia Clow (Med/Surg)
- Bobbie Turnipseed (CCU)
- Alternate: Travis Marquez (CCU)

The team has donated 168 hours preparing for and negotiating our contract.
Please thank them for all their hard work!

Our ONA/St. Alphonsus Medical Center—Ontario (SAO) negotiation team and labor relations representative, Ateusa Salemi, RN, were available in the hospital on Friday, Nov. 11 to answer questions and provide updates to nurses about the status of our negotiations with the hospital.

It was clear by the questions and feedback we received that some incomplete information has been circulated to the nurses. We would like to answer those questions and also respond to an email that was sent to all of you by the hospital.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is there a wage Scale?

We believe so, yes. The medical center’s team told us that all of the other nurses in the St. Alphonsus system are on a wage scale. They have refused to show us their proposed scale citing concerns about competition with St. Luke’s in Boise if the scale is made public. So far, they have offered to show the ONA labor relations representative and her immediate supervisor the scale on the condition of a confidentiality agreement.

2. If you sign the confidentiality agreement, then we can see what the wages are and the scale?

Maybe. The agreement as it is written allows the labor rep to see the scale. It does not allow her to share details of the scale with the negotiation team or the nurses at the hospital. She would have to decide if it was “good” or “bad” without the rest of us knowing the details. Further, since the hospital has indicated that if they were to use the Boise/Nampa scale, it could not be published or public, there are concerns with tracking wages and raises after the initial implementation. Also, if the scale is not known to the nurses, how will they know if they were placed correctly? In fact, as the confidentiality agreement is currently written, if the scale gets out our labor rep could be sued for damages.

3. How will we know what our pay will be?

That has been one of the reasons we are wary of the proposal by the hospital. With the proposal the hospital has made, your wages would be tied to those of Nampa and Boise. We know what they would be right now, but would have no way to know what they will be next year or any year going forward. In fact, with the language proposed by the hospital, it will be difficult to negotiate even for annual cost of living raises.

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4. We really need raises, what are you doing to get them for us?

Our team has explored many options to bring a wage scale and transparency for the nurses. In fact, we proposed to use the scale from St. Alphonsus -Baker City, which is already in place there and is public. We strongly believe our nurses need to have access to their wage information and think that using the Baker City scale eliminates the hospitals concern for secrecy.

5. What do you mean by secrecy?

The hospital has stated they are concerned about the head-to-head competition they are experiencing in Boise with St. Luke’s. They believe if St. Luke’s obtains their wage scale, they will be able to increase their own salaries to lure nurses away.

6. Protecting nurses from going to St Luke’s seems like a good idea. Why are we opposed?

Obviously, we don’t want to lose qualified nurses to a competitor hospital. However, in reality, there are many factors that lead people to choose one employer over another, salary is only one factor. For instance, St. Luke’s does not have a restrictive dress code and uniform policy. We have pointed out that recruiting new nurses could be made more difficult by these policies, yet the hospital is insistent on them. Also, St. Luke’s is in competition with multiple hospitals in other markets and that does not seem to be driving their wages up unreasonably. The market will drive wages regardless of how “public” the scale is. Another consideration is that many nurses who work in Boise have friends who work at the “competitor” hospitals and it is really easy to secure enough information about wages to reasonably determine the wage differences.

7. How can I help get a wage scale here in Ontario?

There are several ways to show support for our negotiation team. First, please wear your ONA buttons and pins, especially on days we are in negotiations. Second, if you are available, please consider attending a negotiation session. All of our nurse members are welcome to be quiet observers. Third, let your managers know that you are interested in having the wage scale in place in St. Alphonsus -Baker City adopted here in Ontario.

8. What do I tell my coworkers?

Let them know that our negotiation team is working hard on their behalf. Share this newsletter, encourage them to wear their ONA buttons, be active members and talk to the negotiation team.

9. What has already been agreed to? My manager is telling me that the negotiation team isn’t cooperating.

Our negotiation team recognized that the hospital priority was to standardize Ontario with the rest of the Saint Alphonsus Health System (SAHS). To that end, we did agree to almost all of the hospitals proposals regarding policies, including moving paid time off (PTO) and leave of absence policies to be governed by policy. We also agreed to their proposal regarding flu shots and masking and to follow the SAHS uniform policy.

We have counter-proposed implementing the SAHS Baker City pay scale. The Baker City scale is a SAHS scale, allowing the standardization that the system claims to want while also making wages in Ontario transparent for you, our members. We believe that we have shown a great deal of willingness to cooperate and move forward and were disappointed that the hospital didn’t seem to recognize this.

Future negotiation sessions are set for:

- Nov. 28
- Nov. 29
- Dec. 7
- Dec. 8

We hope to be done with negotiations in time to implement changes on Jan. 1, 2017.

Wear your ONA buttons, badge holders and badge backers to show your support for the negotiation team at the table!