Aren’t We Worth the Same as Corvallis Nurses?

Not according to our employer! Samaritan Health Services says that different hospitals have different needs and Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital (SPCH) nurses should be paid less than Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center (GSRMC) nurses.

They propose an annual two percent across the board increase, which will not bring us to pay parity with GSRMC. Our proposal is a one-year contract with the same wage scale as GSRMC.

Our team at Samaritan Albany General Hospital, who are also bargaining, have proposed the same wage parity. We hope that next year a coalition of the four ONA bargaining units could bargain one common wage scale, like we bargained the COVID side letter.

In the ongoing nursing shortage, we need to recruit and retain experienced nurses on the coast. We are not being greedy. To provide high-quality patient care, we need every nurse position filled. To add insult to injury, our employer’s proposal will not even bring us to wage parity with Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. The cost of living in Lincoln County is higher than in the Willamette Valley. We face severe challenges to recruit nurses. SPCH must earn the same wages as in the valley.

SPCH can afford wage parity. It has been profitable each of the last seven years. By comparison, GSRMC has lost money every year in the last nine years, except in 2015.

Working in a smaller hospital means nurses must have a wider scope of nursing practice. In a larger facility, a nurse has more coworkers in their department who can handle the unusual cases. At Newport, we don’t have that luxury, the nurse must be prepared to take any case directed our way.

Mixed Results

Our second day of bargaining on May 17 produced mixed results. We reached tentative agreements on six articles (Articles 3, 8, 11, 14, 16 and MOU – Float), mostly on minor issues and cleanup. Only five articles remain open (Articles 4, 5, 9, 24 and Appendix B).

However, we are far apart on economic issues in Article 4 – Compensation and Appendix B – Surgical Services. Besides wages, we have not reached agreement on:

- Holiday call rates
- Excessive call rates
- Evening and night shift differentials
- Weekend differentials
- BSN/MSN differentials
Moreover, we are the only Samaritan ONA bargaining unit that does not receive an unscheduled weekend premium of $20/hour.

See both parties’ proposals and counter proposals as well as a handy bargaining tracker on our webpage: Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital Bargaining Unit - Oregon Nurses Association (oregonrn.org)

What You Can Do to Help

Our bargaining team cannot move our employer alone. The employer needs to see our members stand up in mass.

1) Attend the Next Bargaining Session: Monday, June 7

We suggest you call in by phone to 971-254-1254, phone conference ID: 714 996 023#

Or click here to join the meeting on any device

When we meet in caucus (i.e. each team meets separately), our side joins Gary’s Zoom room. See the login details below.

Thanks to the 14 nurses who attended bargaining on May 17! So far, more than 20 nurses have showed up, which is 20 percent of our members. That is a great start! However, we will need a whole lot more to participate to move our employer. See below for details to join us at our next bargaining session on Monday, June 7. Even a few minutes adds weight to our voice.

2) Green Up Beginning June 3

To support our team, we are asking every nurse to join us by wearing green beginning Thursday, June 3. Every nurse should plan to wear green and ONA swag (buttons, badge backers, pulley badge holders) until we reach an agreement. We encourage nurses to be creative with green arm bands, green scarves or caps, green headbands, green jewelry, or green hair accessories. We want everyone to begin on the same day - like a hundred flowers blooming at one time!

Our bargaining team will also be distributing car signs. Beginning June 3, every time you are at work, please place a car sign in your car. We want the parking lot to be a sea of ONA signs.

The goal is to show the employer we are unified. It is important that every nurse display unity by showing their green until we get a settlement. It is not enough to do it on one day.

Upcoming Membership Meetings

May 27, Thursday, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. and 7:45 – 8:45 p.m. on Zoom.

Join Gary’s Zoom Meetings in one of these ways:

1) Any device’s browser
   https://zoom.us/j/2810307587?pwd=czBLmBV0VXKzJFWWh0b1ZSY1UT09

2) Download the Zoom app to any device
Meeting ID: 281 030 7587
Passcode: 6BjRSn
3) Dial on any phone 253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 281 030 7587
Passcode: 070754

For more information, contact any bargaining team member:

- Rex Payne (ED)
- Sharon Bliss (LD)
- Terri McCulley (PACU)
- Shari Suchy (LD)
- Leanne Chavez (OR)
- Rhiannon Updenkelder (LD)

Or text/call our labor rep at 503-444-0690 or Aquiar@OregonRN.org