COVID-19 & Contract Bargaining

Recently Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC) nurses received a message from Heather Wall, Riverbend CNO and James Yale, University District Director of Nursing, saying they wanted to open our contract almost a year before it expires and separate the Medical Center and Home Care Services negotiations. Your elected representatives on the SHMC and Sacred Heart Home Care Services (SHHCS) executive committees were carefully considering this request when the administration chose to communicate directly with you instead of respecting your elected leaders.

One of the reasons they provided to open the contract early was to provide COVID-19 compensation. This didn’t make any sense, and many of you reached out to your leaders to express your frustration.

As many of you know, if PeaceHealth (PH) truly wanted to provide COVID-19 related compensation or retention bonuses, they could have done so by now. We don’t need to open the entire contract for them to do this. For nearly a year we have been asking for some COVID-19 relief and they have repeatedly refused to consider anything, even when most of the other facilities in the state already have.

There is a strong possibility that PH wants to open the contract to make fundamental changes to your working conditions.

Currently, we are working to get folks paid for missed work due to COVID-19 exposure in the BHU and Rehab. We are trying to straighten out the ICU retention bonuses. We are trying to rebuild the culture at PH through the CTC. We are getting someone back to work that just got wrongfully terminated while they were on FMLA! We are creating and monitoring safe staffing plans. We are trying to improve the new graduate program. We are working to reduce violence in the workplace. We are trying to regain control of your education dollars, so we know that you are getting them. And we are trying to make sure folks know how important it is to fill out SRDFs. This is the short list of our struggles to enforce your contract.

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Call to Action Tuesday

What can you do to help?

1. Participate in the next Day of Action
   ♦ Tuesday, April 12. Wear your black ONA scrubs and buttons. Display your car windshield ONA shade. *see page 2 for pick up location.

2. Stay tuned and stay engaged!
   ♦ Make sure you are getting important emails and text messages from your leaders. If you aren’t receiving them, please update your information. Follow the link below
   ♦ www.OregonRN.org/11
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We need the trust to be rebuilt. We need the current contract to be followed, so we have less disheartened nurses, and fewer problems.

We also recognize how exhausted we all are after the past few years. Gearing up for contract negotiations is a big lift requiring a lot of work on everyone’s part. We need time for our team to be prepared and to identify your priorities as we look toward our next contract. Our current contract is a good one that continues to provide good wage and differential increases while protecting your positions and rights.

Lastly, we have negotiated the Medical Center and Home Care contracts together for decades. This has been beneficial to both bargaining units.

There are no benefits to either bargaining unit in changing this practice. We stand together in solidarity and that makes us stronger.

After considering their proposal, we do not believe it is in the best interest of either bargaining unit to open the contract early or to negotiate these contracts separately.

Before we had a chance to respond to their request, they messaged all of you directly. It is very disappointing to see the hospital leadership resort to this kind of tactic – to message you directly instead of waiting for your elected leaders to provide them with a response.

It tells us that they do not respect your organization or the trust you have granted your elected leaders. You have entrusted us with the important task of being your representatives and we are grateful to you for that responsibility. We will continue to work tirelessly, courageously, and with integrity on your behalf as we move into the last year of the contract and prepare for negotiations in 2023 as planned.

As a reminder, the largest wage increase of this 4-year contract is just around the corner. The first full pay period after July 1, 2022 you will see a 3.5 percent increase in your wages. Something to look forward to!

ONA Scrubs & Gear Distribution

We have spent several days distributing scrubs, buttons, and window shades to nurses over the past month. We have many buttons and window shades left.

We also have more black ONA scrubs if you still need to pick yours up. We are out of the smaller sizes now, but we have scrubs available in medium through 2XL.

You can come by 200CD at Riverbend on April 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. to pick these items up.

If you work at University District and are still needing scrubs, please reach out to Laura Lay at Lay@OregonRN.org. Thanks!

Culture Survey

Three years ago, your volunteer ONA nurse leaders on the PNCC compiled and analyzed years of your Staffing Request & Documentation Forms (SRDF) and identified a pattern of bullying and incivility in the local PH facilities.

We won’t take up your time describing why bullying and incivility can lead to high turn-over, patient errors, and serious mental fatigue. You know why.

You are seeing and feeling it. The Cultural Transformation Committee (CTC) was born out a partnership between Sacred Heart management and volunteer ONA nurses to try and improve the culture that has allowed these behaviors to take root.

You were just asked to complete an ONA sponsored survey to help us figure out how well we have been doing.
You can view all the results online: [https://tinyurl.com/yeauea8j](https://tinyurl.com/yeauea8j)

Here, we are going to focus on a few key areas that demonstrates that the CTC worked even in the face of unprecedented pressure. And if COVID-19 had not turned our world upside down, we believe we would have been even more successful.

Many of the areas we are measuring showed improvement in the first year of actions. But, when COVID-19 hit, progress slowed, stalled and even regressed in some areas. For example, in 2019, 58 percent of RNs felt bullied by a coworker. This dropped to 40 percent in 2020 but went back to 58 percent in 2021. This is unfortunate, but not unexpected.

Nurses and administration that were allocating some of their time and experience to help us improve were being pulled in too many directions to continue the work of the CTC. Every nurse was asked to take on more shifts and cross train to assist in high need areas of the hospital. Policies were changed rapidly with minimal warning and minimal input from frontline staff. Yet nurses were expected to do and know everything, or risk punishment. This re-created the ideal environment for horizontal violence.

We also lost much of the progress made in the areas of feeling supported, having your professional judgment respected, and the frequency of feeling that your license is at risk, and/or moral injury. Burnout stood out as an area where we are actually worse off than we were three years ago. But the fact that we are not worse off in every area, supports an argument that the work of the CTC is effective.

Other areas we had focused on continued to improve. The number of RN’s feeling bullied by management dropped from 60 percent to 45 percent and then to 43 percent in 2021. Thousands of dollars were poured into training programs for the mangers by PH at the request of the CTC, because it was identified as an affordable fix with long term impacts. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that leading by example is one of the most effective ways to influence culture. While 43 percent is still much higher than anyone would like to see, we believe this is a substantial improvement.

The perception of SHMC as a toxic workplace also continued trending down from 5.93 out of 10 in 2019 to 5.17 in 2020 and 4.91 in 2021. This is not where we want to be, but it’s encouraging that it’s slowly improving.

Another area of improvement is documentation. Documenting meals and breaks continued to improve.
from 44 percent to 52 percent to 57 percent. And the fear of retaliation for being honest about documenting the missed meals and breaks held on to its improvement. Fear of retaliation was at 43 percent in 2019, 21 percent in 2020 and 26 percent in 2021.

Overall, we are convinced that the Peace Health/ONA partnership through the CTC has helped improve the working conditions at the two Eugene facilities. But we need more participation from all the areas of administration and nursing.

It takes authentic leadership on both sides, many conversations from many perspectives, and continued financial commitments from PH.

We are hopeful that the hospital administration will continue to be a dependable partner in this difficult work. Culture is all of us. If you are interested in showing up to see what we can do together, please reach out to Whitmire@OregonRN.org

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The ONA Convention and House of Delegates will be held May 17-19, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency in Portland, OR. The theme for the convention is *Stand Up, Rise Up, Celebrate! The Power of Our Profession.*

The past two years have been difficult for everyone, bringing new challenges at every turn, all while exacerbating many of the issues that nurses have been facing for years. The 2022 ONA Convention is an opportunity for leaders from across the state to come together to learn from these challenges, share our knowledge, and move the nursing profession forward. Together, we can **stand up** to employers who seek to put corporate profits ahead of those who are caring for the community. Together, we can **rise up** and build a better health care system that values caregivers and patients. Together, we can **celebrate** our victories, small and large, over the last two years as we continue to fight for a health care system that works for us, our colleagues, our patients, and our communities.

Join us for the ONA House of Delegates (May 18) and two days of educational sessions (May 17 & 19).

www.OregonRN.org/event/2022Convention