Information About COVID-19

Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is working hard to make sure that nurses and our patients are taken care of during this time. To that end ONA has set up a resource page for our nurses at oregonrn.org/coronavirus. It currently has information about the work we have been doing and a gathering of resources and information for reference.

We have also sent an information request to all of our represented hospitals to verify that they have plans and supplies in place to deal with this outbreak. As a reminder, while there has been both a national emergency and a state of emergency declared in Oregon, our contract remains in place.

Changes to your scheduling and hours must be negotiated. The state of emergency declaration for Oregon allows for the provisions of the staffing law to be waived. So, your units don’t have to follow the staffing plan if the hospital has declared an emergency and also staffing law prohibitions on mandatory overtime are waived. While provisions of the Oregon hospital nurse staffing law may be waived, our contract is in effect, so contract language must be followed. The contract is in effect, whatever language the contract provides, must be followed.

Personal Protective Equipment

What should a nurse do when they feel their assignment is not safe due to not having appropriate or adequate personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Nurses who are immunocompromised should notify their employers now, or as soon as possible of the risks for them in caring for a patient with COVID-19, asking to not take care of these patients. If this request is refused, please document that refusal.

If a nurse is asked to care for a patient with COVID-19 and does not believe that they have the PPE necessary to do so safely. It’s important to raise those concerns. First, make sure you are aware of what the current OHA guidelines for the type of patient they are asking you to care for (Rule-out/ positive/monitoring).

After you have determined that you are being asked to take an assignment you don’t feel is safe, raise that issue with the charge RN, then the supervisor, or manager.

Clarify what your concerns are, what the evidence supporting that concern is and then ask for the PPE that you think is needed.

If you are still being directed to accept the assignment, accept the assignment, then file an SRDF (go to: www.OregonRN.org/115) and contact your labor representative or bargaining unit leader.

While we recognize that this current situation is fluid and rapidly evolving, the safety of our members is important and can’t just be sacrificed.
The 2020 ONA Statewide Elections are now open for voting.

Visit www.OregonRN.org/elections or follow LINK

Oregon State Board of Nursing Position Statement: COVID-19

Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) has a news position statement out concerning refusal of assignment related to COVID-19:

“All nurses in Oregon are licensed for patient care by the state. The State Public Health Department is charged with Oregon’s response to this unprecedented event. This event has also resulted in confusing and conflicting information regarding transmission, healthcare worker precautions, high-risk categorization, etc. As a state agency, the Oregon State Board of Nursing follows state mandated procedures and will follow and hold nurses accountable to the recommendations published by the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division.

Following World Health Organization (WHO) or Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations may be an organizational decision but not an individual practitioner decision if their organization has decided to follow Oregon Public Health recommendations. If Oregon Public Health determines that a WHO or CDC guideline is to be followed, then it also becomes a recommendation of Oregon Public Health.

Nurses are reminded of their social contract with the people of Oregon to care for them at their time of vulnerability and to use scientific and evidenced based criteria for determining their own risk stratification and their ability to care safely for patients.

The Board has determined that nurses cannot refuse a patient care assignment because the organization is following OHA Public Health Division recommendations regarding PPE and other infection control practices rather than WHO or CDC guidelines.”

COVID-19 Survey

To report a violation of Coronavirus protocol in your facility, please email practice@oregonrn.org with as many details as possible while being mindful of HIPAA guidelines.

ONA is also asking all members to take an ONA COVID-19 Workplace Survey to help better understand the work being done by facilities across the state.

To stay up to date on the work being done and to take the COVID-19 Workplace survey, visit: COVID-19 Workplace Survey Link