

Sept. 29, 2017

AN OPEN LETTER TO NURSES AT SKY LAKES FROM YOUR BARGAINING TEAM

Dear fellow nurses at Sky Lakes Medical Center,

We have received a warm and enthusiastic response to our membership initiative in the last few weeks. Thank you to the 50 new Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) members! We are so proud you have joined with our 40 long-time members to advocate for our patients and ourselves.

We are excited about the renewed strength this gives us as we move into contract bargaining this fall. As your bargaining team, we represent all 200+ nurses in our bargaining unit!

In negotiations, we seek to partner with our employer to deliver the important services we provide together to our community. We hope to build on our past productive relationship at the bargaining table with a fruitful exchange of ideas.

Thus, we reject the employer's efforts to divide us. In their recent email to nurses, our employer is actively engaging in an attempt to separate nurses into two camps. We were surprised and disappointed to read this email.

The employer's message is unprecedented at Sky Lakes, where both sides have conducted themselves professionally and politely throughout our decades of bargaining labor contracts. We are outraged that the employer now seeks to undermine our past collaboration and sow division among the floor nurses.

In their message, our employer further explains that ONA dues are optional and total more than \$1,000 annually. This is true, but what they fail to mention is that by joining ONA, our dues strengthen nurses' voices in bargaining and in general. Moreover, our pay at Sky Lakes is substantially higher than if nurses bargained their wages individually with our employer.

Did you know that at unrepresented hospitals, nurses earn 27% less than at hospitals where nurses bargain collectively? These enhanced wages at facilities where nurses are united more than cover the minor cost of our professional association dues.

For example, at Sky Lakes, a median nurse (at step 5) currently earns \$38.42/hour or roughly \$72,000 annually in base salary. **Without a collective bargaining agreement, that same five-year nurse at an unrepresented facility earns \$20,000 less than at our hospital!** We think \$1,000 is a small sacrifice in exchange for an additional \$19,000 in base wages.

In solidarity,

Your Oregon Nurses Association bargaining team: Jaime Beck, Sabrina DeVall,
Robyn Ewing, Rose Keppinger, Stacey Mathis, Monica Meier, and Juliann Underwood