COVID-19 Updates

On Thursday, Sept. 9 administration from STA and ONA executive committee members met and discussed concerns surrounding the Governor’s order.

During this meeting administration was not able to provide much information as “we are still waiting for particulars,” and that all things, including the exemptions are being “handled at the corporate level.”

Further, conversations regarding the number or percent of unvaccinated staff that were going to be impacted is unclear; administration communicated that nurses who received their vaccination outside of the hospital are still being submitted and accounted for and those needing to submit their vaccination cards must do so to remain employed after Oct. 18, 2021.

Staffing concerns were raised by ONA and were solidified by administration.

It was communicated that RNs are being asked to orient to other departments, only to receive push back and refusals. Administration mentioned to ONA that they are “looking for ways to retain RNs.” This discussion led to ONA presenting proposals surrounding increased DIFFICULT TO FILL incentives, volunteer incentives, and retention incentives. Administration asked to review these proposals and to meet again later.

On Oct. 4, 2021, administration and ONA again met for further discussion surrounding COVID-19; the discussion began with concerns of RNs being denied OSHA leave.

According to administration a code is needed from the hospital to be submitted, and any RN who has been denied the $1400/week of OSHA leave should follow up with Richard Robinson, system VP of employment and labor for Common Spirit Health.

RNs that have submitted their exemptions on time should have been notified of determination by the end of the week of Oct. 4, 2021.

Administration is aware of the broken link that was previously sent out and sincerely apologized, if you still have not received the new link please contact: CSH-COVID19@commonspirit.org

Those who are currently in the process of vaccination and will go outside of the deadline will be put on unpaid leave, until they are fully vaccinated. Those who choose to remain unvaccinated will also be placed on unpaid leave but will be allowed to utilize PTO for payment and access to benefits (the RN may also pay personally) for up to 90 days.

ONA and the administration will reconvene on Monday, Oct. 11, 2021 for further discussion and review of proposals surrounding pay incentives.
Walkouts and Strikes

Your ONA executive team was notified by the administration about rumors of a possible walkout on Oct. 19. ONA wants you to know that any unsanctioned walkouts, strikes, or work stoppages are not protected activities.

If any St. Anthony bargaining unit represented RN participates in such activity it is against the advice of the union and your union leadership. With all of this in mind, know that your executive committee is working tirelessly in search of a solution. You are valued, you are heard, and you are important. Please reach out to your executive committee members if you have any ideas for a resolution.

The following statement was drafted as guidance by the ONA Labor Cabinet on this subject:

ONA bargaining units should honor the “No Strike” provisions of their collective bargaining agreements and therefore should not issue a 10-Day Notice, nor participate in any concerted refusal to work by nurses in response to these mandates.

The Cabinet does not condone walkouts, impromptu strikes, or any concerted refusal to work as protest against these mandates. A nurse who participates in any concerted refusal to work in contravention of “No Strike” language of their contract should know that ONA may not grieve any resulting discipline. All nurses should act consistently with their professional obligations, their employment obligations, and their obligations to the community. If a nurse is disciplined for walking out or refusing testing and chooses to file a grievance themselves (if allowed under the bargaining agreement), the Cabinet will review each grievance on its own merits, consistent with policy and past practice. However, as part of that review, a grievant should consider that absent unique and extraordinary circumstances, a nurse who is disciplined for refusing a testing requirement will be unlikely to be successful in an arbitration challenging that refusal.

The St Anthony Contract reads:

ARTICLE 14. – UNINTERRUPTED PATIENT CARE

It is recognized that the Hospital is engaged in a public service requiring continuous operation and it is agreed that recognition of such obligation of continuous service is imposed upon both the nurse and the Association.

During the term of this Agreement, neither the Association nor its members, agents, representatives, employees, or persons acting in concert with them shall incite, encourage, support or participate in any strike, sympathy strike, picketing, hand-billing critical of the Hospital, walkout, slowdown or other work stoppage of any nature whatsoever.

Upon notification, to be confirmed in writing, by the Hospital to the Association that certain nurses are engaging in such activity, the Association shall advise such nurses orally and in writing (with a copy to the Hospital) to cease such activity and return to work immediately and the consequences of any refusal to do so.

Any nurse participating in any strike, sympathy strike, picketing, hand-billing critical of the Hospital, walkout, slowdown or other work stoppage will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

The Hospital agrees that there shall be no lockouts of nurses during the term of this Agreement.