Tentative Agreement Reached, Ratification Vote to Be Held

We began negotiations back in April and met regularly every month (sometimes multiple times a month) in hopes of reaching a fair contract. Our negotiations were tense as we faced not only threats of closure at Elliot House but also the potential reclassification of Pendleton Cottages that could have led to losing our nurses and/or the closing of that facility as well. After months of negotiations and facing many large obstacles, our ONA bargaining team is pleased to report that on July 23, we reached a tentative agreement (TA) with the State of Oregon's bargaining team.

This agreement is tentative and will only become final if ratified by a majority vote of our ONA nurse members. The ONA bargaining team is feeling very good about this agreement and we are happy to report that we are recommending a YES vote for ratification. Some highlights of the TA:

**WAGES AND HEALTHCARE**

- Retroactive to July 1, 2019 all steps increase by 2.15 percent.
- July 1, 2020 - creation of a new top.
- October 1, 2020 - all steps increase by 3 percent.
- Salary increases will be nearly 10 percent over two years to compensate for the 1.5 to 3 percent loss in salary due to the state-wide cuts to PERS contributions.
- No cuts to our healthcare plans despite the average cost of healthcare increasing close to 7 percent every year.

**PROTECTING PENDLETON COTTAGES**

- Assurances that Pendleton Cottages will remain a Class 1 facility. New jobs will continue to be posted and there are protections in the TA around better nurse recruitment and retention to provide 24/7 staffing, including self-scheduling for nurses at Pendleton.

**IMPROVEMENT FOR ON-CALL PAY**

- One hour of on-call pay for every six hours worked rather than every eight hours worked.

**NOTICE: RATIFICATION VOTE TO BE HELD**

Emails will be sent to all full ONA members. Online voting will be open from 8 a.m. July 30 to 4 p.m. July 31.

Please make plans to find email access at some point during those two days. **There will not be a mail ballot, proxy voting, or in-person voting.** If you require assistance voting, please call our ONA office at (503) 293-0011. We want to ensure everyone is able to vote! If you are not yet a member of ONA but would like to vote, sign up today at www.OregonRN.org/apply. If you are a member but don’t get ONA emails, please call our office during normal business hours at (503) 293-0011, or update your contact information online at www.OregonRN.org/11.

We encourage all ONA members to learn about the new agreement and be fully informed before voting. Additionally, bargaining team members will be available for questions and discussion. You can contact our labor representative, Amber Cooper, with questions at Cooper@OregonRN.org.

You can find an article-by-article summary of the TA, as well as the full redline, on the ONA/STOR bargaining unit webpage at www.OregonRN.org/96.

A printed copy of the TA and the summary table will also be placed in break rooms. If you can’t locate a copy, please check in with your bargaining team representative.
Tentative Agreement Reached, Ratification Vote to Be Held (continued from page 1)

Left to right: Clare Chevalier (SACU-Eliot), Marcie Fitzgerald (Pendleton Cottage), and Lori Gruenwald (SACU-Outreach)

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS TO EDUCATION

• Doubling the size of the fund for tuition reimbursement.
• Reimbursement for two new certifications (ANCC and DDNA) with 1.5 percent differentials.
• Paid time and reimbursement for Oregon State Board of Nursing required courses.

SAFETY

• Improved voice for nurses on safety issues including safe staffing levels and methods for identifying trends related to incoming patients and changes in current patients that affect the safety in our facilities.

SUCCESS IN SOLIDARITY

We succeeded in reaching this TA because of the hard work of our nurse leaders and the support of every single bargaining unit member. We stood together during a very stressful negotiating session and never backed down! Our leaders spoke at great lengths about how these wins were possible because we had each others’ backs from one facility to another - all the way from Salem, to Portland, to Pendleton. An injury to one is an injury to all. We would not let any group of nurses, no matter how few, face an untenable and unsafe work environment.

When it came down to it, our nurses did what we always do; we put our patients first by advocating for increased education, better support for call time, addressing vital safety issues in staffing, and improving the scheduling of nurses at Pendleton Cottages. These changes protect both patients and staff in an otherwise high-risk facility.

Our hope is that these changes can help us better recruit and retain staff to keep Pendleton Cottages running safely. Management had shared their plans to declassify the facility and take away the 24-hour nursing care, which would eliminate nurses’ ability to use restraint and seclusion if and when any serious incidents occur. Management claimed these events don’t happen often, but we countered that even one instance of a patient or staff being at risk is one too many. We went to our elected officials and had Representative Nosse contact the superintendent of the state hospital to advocate for us - and it worked! We got real answers showing a commitment to keep Pendleton Cottages a Class 1 facility.

Throughout this process we were deeply inspired by the solidarity between nurses and our union cousins at SEIU in Pendleton and AFSCME in SACU. AFSCME coworkers stood side-by-side with us as we showed our legislators around our facility and asked them to keep it open. Together we were successful!

Our ONA bargaining unit may be fewer than 40 nurses in a state employing tens of thousands of people, but our voice was mighty, our cause was just, and we spoke with passion and credibility in our profession. Our nurses are what make our workplaces stay open. Together in ONA, we are what makes the State of Oregon work. We are so very proud to be ONA members.

ONA Bargaining Team

Amber Cooper, ONA Lead Negotiator
Clare Chevalier, SACU-Eliot
Marcie Fitzgerald, Pendleton Cottage
Lori Gruenwald, SACU-Outreach

State of Oregon Management Bargaining Team

Debbie Pillsbury Harvey, DAS/LRU Lead Negotiator
Kristina Koos, DAS/LRU
Chip Killen, OSHSC/PC
Billy Martin, OHS/SACU
Bryan Wier, DHS/SACU
MaryAnna Gordon, DHS/SACU
Amy Speakman, OHA/Pendleton Cottage
Cindy Hoffman, DHS