Mediation Sessions 1&2

We had an amazing turnout for our “mediation support rally” on Thursday morning and our negotiating team thanks you for the support! This rally was just a warm up for future action if the employer does not agree to our very reasonable terms.

Mediation Day One:

Day one of mediation was painfully slow. Both sides were open about the fact that we simply do not trust each other. The federal mediator even said, “there is a problem here, I don’t come back year after year because things are going well here in Bend.” The ONA team spent much of the day attempting to find language that would be accepted around unit practice committees (UPCs). St. Charles Medical Center (STC-B) remains uninterested in any UPC structure that does not give them absolute control over the outcomes. ONA, Magnet, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) believe that “shared governance” is only possible when power is shared and leadership roles are distributed to bedside nurses. However, St. Charles continues to spend a great deal of energy looking for loopholes and playing “legal gymnastics” in order to avoid relinquishing any control to the nurses.

The ONA team is asking that:

- UPC’s exist in every department.
- Members are chosen via an election of the staff on the unit.
- Members are released from work in order to attend meetings and paid straight time.
- There is a process for appeal if management and the UPC disagree.

At this point, we are sad to report that the St. Charles team is doing everything they can to keep UPC language out of the contract so that they are not accountable to keeping with their commitments when it is convenient.

Mediation Day Two:

No progress was made on wages and benefits as St. Charles continues to make offers that are significantly below both inflation and cost-of-living increases for our area. Your ONA team continues to tell St. Charles that with each subsequent offer of this kind, our nurses feel more disrespected! A clear message has been sent that ONA cannot support any offer that erodes the viability of nursing as a middle class income capable of supporting a family. St. Charles is also determined to bring nurses under the same terrible health insurance premium structure as the other (non-medical) St. Charles employees. We have demonstrated that St. Charles offers the worst health insurance in Oregon of any health system but they seem unfazed by this. It is clear that preventing non-nurse employees from unionizing is the guiding principle to the hospital for these negotiations. When we show how nurses are treated and compensated around the state, St. Charles just compares us to non-nurses at St. Charles. We agree that St. Charles treats other clinicians poorly too! This is not a reason that nurses will accept this!

Hours after mediation was scheduled to end, the two teams did come to resolution of article seven which was a big win for the nurses and our patients. St. Charles nurses made it clear prior to

Continued on page 2
Mediation Sessions 1&2  
(continued from page 1)

negotiations that floating practices at St. Charles were extremely unsafe and dissatisfying to our nurses. In article seven we have made great progress to limit floating within clusters that fall into statewide and nationwide standards for hospitals of our size. We know this new contract language will not fix every problem overnight, but we are excited to report that we are moving in the right direction! Our tentative agreement in article seven will also significantly reduce the hours requirement for relief nurses as well as providing more flexibility for relief nurses in terms of when they fill those hours.

The misuse of relief nurses at St. Charles is one of our greatest issues around staffing. The tentative agreement (TA) on article seven brings us much closer to industry standards in relief nurse requirements which we believe have a domino effect and allow ONA to enforce current contract language to prevent St. Charles from using relief nurses as an alternative to opening full and part time FTE’s.

St. Charles agreed to standards around the med/surg and critical care float pool which will empower and protect the nurses in float pool, making it a more desirable position. St. Charles has also agreed to the concept of a float pool differential however we are still negotiating the rate. Their last proposal was 25 percent of the differential at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), which we believe is insufficient to recruit and retain expert nurses to this difficult and important position.

It is no accident that we finally made progress the day after nearly 400 nurses showed that we will no longer accept being treated like “the help.” Nursing is a profession that deserves respect. You have shown and will continue to show St. Charles that our nurses will not tolerate being undervalued and underpaid according to statewide standards.

St. Charles has a choice: to do the right thing right now and begin healing the relationship between our employer and our nurses, or they can force us into continued escalation and displaying deficiencies publicly in order to fight for our profession and our families.

St. Charles, the choice is yours!

Holiday Carol Contest

Do you have a knack for puns, parody, or poetry? Is your frustration with St. Charles simmering over? Direct your energy into a holiday carol re-write! We’ll publish the submissions and ask nurses to vote on their favorites, before awarding prizes. No limit on the number of carols you can submit. Just keep it kid-safe, please!

Deadline for entries is Monday, Dec. 17. Send your masterpiece(s) to Hallay@OregonRN.org.

2019 ONA NURSE LOBBY DAY

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, Salem, OR

Join hundreds of nurses and nursing students at the State Capitol in Salem. ONA will provide resources, materials and training to all attendees. First-time participants are welcome.

Visit www.OregonRN.org to learn more