PICU/Peds Stand Strong for Staffing

When management decided to try and save money by moving to a one charge nurse model for the PICU and IP Peds units, nurses stood together and won for patient safety! This unit never backed down and kept fighting to ensure a staffing plan that actually works for nurses and the patients they serve. They wrote letters, showed up to open forums, signed petitions, sticky-noted the displayed staffing plan, and raised their voices with the House Wide Staffing Committee and the Chief Nursing Officer.

We commend the courage and solidarity of all nurses in those units, and in particular the following nurses for their leadership in this campaign:

- Amanda Schumaker
- Nicole Severson
- Kelly Stevenson
- Megan Waltosz
- Adam Erickson
- Amanda Prescott
- Sydney Trueblood
- Matthew Gadbois
- Lorin Wolfram
- Jean Moody
- Chelsea Hobson
- Leah Holstrom
- Karen Whetsell.

Resource Nurses Demand Equitable Treatment in COVID Protections as Frontline Caregivers that Provide Essential Support

At the beginning of the pandemic, resource nurses were excluded from the initial COVID agreement that provided some emergency leave time for missed shifts due to COVID-caused low-census. While that agreement expired back in the spring and our union is still fighting to secure a new agreement, resource nurses came together to demand parity! Nurses signed petitions, gathered stories, and met with the CNO. While it is still unclear what the final COVID agreement will look like for all nurses, resource nurses raised their voices and stood together—this solidarity is critical for ensuring resource nurse rights now and in contract negotiations next year. In particular we commend all of the outreach that the following nurses

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Nurses in Action – 2020 the Year in Review

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did to build power for resource nurses at St. Vincent:

- Molly McMillon (PICU)
- Lisa Fellin (MBU)
- Linda Dalton (PACU)

NICU Nurses take Charge of Schedule Problems Caused by Management

The NICU nurses have mobilized! They just completed a survey to gather staff feedback on their unit scheduling guidelines. The need for a survey was identified after administration told the union they would be eliminating the rule of six, a popular scheduling rule in their unit that impacts how weekends are scheduled, among other important areas. The staff in the unit came out with an impressive 91 percent participation. We’ll be releasing the survey results soon and signaling to management to stop meddling with a scheduling system that works – under the auspices of budget and inefficiencies.

COVID Units – Med B, 6 & 7 East, ICU, & ED

What is a union but a group of workers who accomplish together what they can’t get done alone? Our union is all 1550 nurses at St. Vincent. Sometimes what we do together is our jobs – caring for our patients and the community. Never have the stakes been higher than this year during a global pandemic. Sometimes the work of our union is in those small moments when we lean on each other to advocate for what we need to keep our patients safe. That might be turning to a co-worker on night shift on Med B to fill out an SRDF form with you or backing up your coworker in the ED when they go to ask for new PPE.

We also want to take the time to recognize the hard work of all our frontline units fighting this pandemic and the countless hours they’ve put in and risks they’ve had to take: Emergency Department, Medical B, 6 and 7 East, and ICU. Thank you also to all of you that have been floated and redeployed to new areas as staffing crisis levels and surgeries are curtailed.

While we’ve all been impacted by the pandemic, these units are having to face it head on, day in and day out. Our union means we ALL have a voice to ensure that nurses can take care of themselves and their patients, and sometimes that just means standing side by side doing our jobs.

HWSC Updates

Earlier this Fall the House Wide Staffing Committee (HWSC) welcomed Allen Hilton (Float Pool) to the team!

The HWSC is still looking for a representative from the Critical Care Division. If you’re interested in learning more about the opportunity reach out to Co-Chair Kial Cheperka (Main OR)

Soccerkial07@Yahoo.com.

Nurses who wish to join this Committee must be approved by the HWSC nurse representatives and then appointed by the ONA Officers’ Team

COVID Protection Campaign

Providence Meets with ONA, Defers Accepting our Proposal and then Unilaterally Rolls out Changes Two Weeks Later, it’s a Holiday Surprise!

Despite news recently that OHSU and Kaiser Permanente both signed agreements to extend crucial and potentially lifesaving benefits to nurses, Providence is still refusing to agree to strong COVID-19 protections.

This week, bargaining unit chairs were appalled when the employer bypassed our leaders and attempted to unilaterally implement a piecemeal approach to staff and patient safety.

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COVID Protection Campaign

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Bargaining unit chairs from across the state were appalled to see the employer’s efforts this week to bypass ONA elected bargaining unit leadership and unilaterally implement a piecemeal approach to staff and patient safety.

Without a signed agreement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place, these are benefits which Providence can rescind, reduce, or modify at any time, regardless of the needs of ONA nurses during the pandemic. Their plans fall short of the proposal from ONA, which was well within the market as shown by Kaiser and OHSU’s recent COVID agreements.

It is clear that Providence would not even be extending their recently announced provision of COVID benefits without your collective action as ONA members – but with over $12 billion in cash reserves, there is no justification for their behavior toward ONA nurses.

In response, the ONA Providence Bargaining Unit Chairs met this week to authorize a highly visible Portland-area car caravan of ONA nurses and supporters to protest management’s disregard. We have the power to tell our story to a public which stands with health care workers. Mark your calendar for the car caravan on Saturday, Jan. 9 and anticipate more details to follow. Click here to commit to attending this critical action.

We continue to push Providence to agree to a COVID-19 MOU that will bring them up to the community standard, which includes:

- 80 hours emergency pay for ill caregivers
- Widespread testing to account for asymptomatic carriers
- Childcare
- Consistent exposure notifications

Make sure to reach out to your unit steward to get your COVID Bill of Rights solidarity card!

Department Updates for PSVMC

IV Therapy

After the PIV Insertion changes were announced last summer, our union surveyed all the units impacted to identify areas of concern and areas of success. The results were pretty consistent, and we shared those results with our members (here) and with administration. Since then, the validation process has begun in the surgical units. COVID and the staffing crisis has overshadowed our work on these changes, but if you have feedback on this process, please send it to your local officers at APRNemail@gmail.com

4-hour Extra Shift Grievance Resolution – 17 Nurses File Claims for Backpay in Settlement Process

We settled this grievance a few months ago after having to file over a fairly ridiculous decision by administration to stop paying extra shift premium pay if a nurse agreed to work an extra shift of 4 hours, but went home early to save the unit resources. Anyone who wasn’t paid extra shift premium pay for a shift that was scheduled for 4 hours (but ended up working less than 4 hours), between November 2019-December 2020 was entitled to submit a claim for their docked incentive pay. If you have questions, please reach out to an ONA Officer, steward, or Sally LaJoie (ONA Staff).

Fragmented Shift Grievance Marches to Arbitration

The grievance for unpaid premium/extra shift incentive for “fragmented” shifts was not settled and will go to arbitration in 2021. We are in the process of selecting an arbitrator and scheduling the hearing.

Bargaining Begins in Fall – 2021

Start thinking about what is important to you. Have an issue that is complicated and you think might be good for bargaining? Contact your ONA Labor Rep or an officer. We would like to have time to prepare more complex issues before we run our pre negotiation survey.

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Welcome Joe West!

New Labor Representative at St. Vincent

Joe West is joining the St. Vincent team as the ONA staff Labor Representative, replacing Sally LaJoie (who is phasing out in January).

Joe recently led the campaign at OHSU for their contract bargaining and was a representative at OFNHP prior to joining ONA.

He comes with a wealth of experience in healthcare union work. Welcome aboard Joe!

Stewards Council

Stewards Council Just Keeps Growing!

We have the largest steward council in the Providence System. 2020 saw 15 new stewards step up! An additional four will be going through unit elections in the new year. Our goal is to have at minimum one steward per unit, per shift so, we are down to just six units in need of a steward, more are always welcome: PSCU, Children's Float, ADU, Ped's Surgery, Pre-Admit, Cath Lab. If you are interested in becoming a steward, contact Joe West at West@OregonRN.org.

Oregon Nurses Foundation

Supporting Nurses Now and in the Future

The Oregon Nurses Foundation (ONF) looks to support nurses impacted by the pandemic. The ONF COVID-19 Relief Fund was created to help defray the costs of childcare and reimburse frontline providers for hotel or accommodations needed due to shift scheduling, traveling to other work sites and/or self-quarantining between shifts due to potential exposure.

- Click here to learn more about the ONF COVID-19 Relief Fund and how to apply

ONF is also dedicated to supporting the future of nursing through scholarships for nursing students, including the ONF Equity Scholarship Fund. ONA is dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion work and this scholarship was created to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the nursing workforce in Oregon to more closely reflect the patient population.

Please consider making an end of the year donation to ONF to help provide resources for nursing students now and in the future!

- Click here to donate to ONF

Updates for PSVMC (continued from page 3)

Our union is also forming a Contract Action Team (CAT) which is a network of unit communicators that can inform, solicit feedback, and mobilize their coworkers. This places us in the strongest position possible to win a good contract next year.

If you are interested in joining our CAT team, sign-up here or fill out the form on page 4. Contact an officer, steward, or ONA staff if you have questions. Trainings will be offered in the new year.
Sharyl Allender, NICU RN and Steward of 25 Years, Retires

Sharyl Allender retired in early 2020 after 25 years. Was a steward in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), working a total of 32 years at St. Vincent.

She began her career as a restaurant manager, and then an RN in a private hospital in Roseburg, Oregon. Before she came to St. Vincent, Sharyl didn’t have any experience with unions. She came from a family with small businesses and learned later how much unions protect employees.

You’re retired, what do you love best about retirement?

Not working 12-hour shifts.

What do you do with your time now as a retiree?

I am volunteering with Medical Teams International; it has a warehouse and they ship medical supplies out to international locations. You won’t believe this, but for PPE, on the first day they told me to “take what I need” to “feel safe and comfortable” – no limit. Full face masks and N95. I like that I feel appreciated and valued for my nursing experience.

Did you always want to be a nurse?

I don’t know if always, but what I loved about nursing was working with people. I was a single parent and a student at Umpqua Community College when I started doing some research on the profession. I needed a living wage and realized I loved the work.

What are some of the biggest changes and challenges?

As Providence has become more process oriented, there is more expansive managing, and focus on budget and penny pinching. Sometimes it feels like it doesn’t “pay” to have people asking questions. I do not feel like this degree of process focus is supportive of and fosters nursing judgement. People don’t know when to advocate and when to be quiet. I fear that we are losing the growth period for newer nurses to build nursing judgement. If you don’t get to use it early on, it doesn’t necessarily develop.

What made you interested in being a unit steward, and what do you like best about being a steward?

I had some concerns with my manager, and the steward, Lisa May, helped me through a challenging time. She inspired me to step forward along with my coworkers, and a few years later, I became a steward.

I most enjoyed working with people, either my coworkers, the patients, their families, and the manager. I knew the management side and so I was able to understand their perspective which helped but made it harder at times too. I also enjoyed being an advocate for both my coworkers and patients.

Most rewarding experiences:

I cared for a 23 week-er and was able to attend her college graduation! I stayed in touch with her mother on Facebook and she was awarded a triple bachelor’s degree and was on the honor roll. Such a proud moment.

As a Steward and member of the Unit Based Staffing Committee, we worked on a strong staffing plan. We had to present this seven times in HWSC before it was passed, and then even after it was in place, our former director, Lora Horn, refused to allow us to go on divert – this didn’t stop until we filed complaints with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) who came in around 2018-2019, and found they weren’t following our staffing plan. After that, everything started to change for the better!

Do you have any words of wisdom or advice?

Just to remember to stay together and work as a team. When we knew that we had issues in NICU that were not supported by management, we built a strong team to work together.

Growth and learning – it’s important to give people room to grow and not be punitive if people make mistakes.
ANA Launches Resilience & Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource Site

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is committed to meeting the needs of nurses and has launched a NEW Nurse Suicide Prevention and Resilience Resource site to provide information and tools to address the critical issue of suicide prevention.

Research indicates that nurses are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general public. During this unprecedented time, nurses are struggling with mental health issues like fear, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress as they respond to COVID-19 and continue to care for all patients.

Effectively managing these mental health issues is essential in nurse suicide prevention.

ANA’s Resilience and Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource site provides information and tools to:

- Build resilience
- Assist in active crises
- Support suicide survivors
- Offer grief and bereavement coping strategies
- Honor a nurse’s memory

We encourage all nurses to check out the site, bookmark the pages, and share the resources with a colleague or a friend in need.

Nurses, you are not alone. Help is available. Learn more here.

ONA Nurse Leadership Institute - Build Your Leadership Skills

Are you interested in taking your career to the next level? Apply today for the Oregon Nurses Association’s Nurse Leadership Institute (NLI). This free, year-long program is designed to help you improve your leadership and communication skills. Join a dynamic group of people who want to make positive change in health care through politics, practice and labor. In 2021, the NLI will focus on equity in nursing and health care during a series of monthly classes, a group project and a mentorship opportunity.

Space is limited. The deadline to apply is Jan. 31, 2021. Learn more at: