Providence St. Vincent AED/CED Update

ONA Response to Today’s Announcement by Providence Children’s ED (CED) will merge with Adult ED (AED).

Providence announced today in an open meeting with CED and AED nurses that it would be merging or “reorganizing” the CED and AED into a single unit. This is a big change that has potentially wide-reaching impacts to our jobs and patient safety. While it is an employer’s right to make these kinds of decisions, because we are part of a union, it is our right to have a voice in the process. In the coming days, we will be demanding to bargain with management, requesting more information, establishing a negotiations team of nurses, and gathering critical input from you – the frontline nurses. At this point there are many unanswered questions—such as timing and what this change will ultimately look like on the ground. Please read on for details on what we know now and what are the next steps.

Is this a lay off?

While the primary stated reason from administration is patient volumes, it appears at this time there will be no reduction in staff, and that FTEs will remain consistent.

- Click here to review the PowerPoint presentation from management’s open meeting

Can Providence make this change when a union is involved?
The short answer is yes, this is an employer’s right. But they are obligated by law to bargain this with the union. We have a right to bargain over the details of the implementation of this change, such as assignments, schedules, vacation, seniority, training, and orientation. This reorganization is a “mandatory subject” of bargaining, and until we have bargained this change in good faith to completion, the employer must maintain the status quo in these units. The Oregon hospital nurse staffing law and other structural requirements also must be discussed and agreed upon during this process.

What does our union contract say?

The contract addresses Layoffs / Reductions in Force (Art. XVIII, p50-54). But since this is a unit merger / reorganization, and is not covered the contract explicitly, we approach it by bargaining the impact of these changes. This is normal, the contract cannot (and should not) address every scenario, and we can address these types of changes in the bargaining context.

What is next?

First, we update you, our members. We want you to know that we will be asking for your input and expertise as this process moves forward. Providence has announced an ambitious schedule to implement these changes and we will be certain to call for a pause as needed, to ensure that a fair, transparent, and thoughtful process is undertaken, with direct care nurse support and engagement.

Second, we request more information from Providence about this change and issue a formal demand to bargain to preserve our legal rights.

Third, we are forming an ONA-led bargaining team of CED and AED nurses that will be coordinating with the UPC and Staffing Committee. Several CED and AED nurses have already volunteered to be part of this team: Erin Bell (CED), Naomi Nagler (CED), Jessica Lobell (AED, Staffing Committee Member/Officer), and Tricia Macy (AED, Housewide Staffing Committee Member). It is essential our bargaining team has the backing of the rest of the staff behind them so they are empowered at that negotiations table, so we are asking for a confirmation vote from the units.

Please take a minute to vote on your bargaining team here and also find out additional ways to be involved in this process like indicating your interest to join the team, be an alternate, or a part of the contract action team. We do not have resource nurses included in this list and would like to have at least one resource nurse included as a point person for outreach to the resource group.

As we start to look at the proposed changes from Providence, and how this impacts us now and our work in the future, one of our first tasks will be to develop a survey of the membership to better understand your priorities. Please keep an eye out for that in the coming weeks.

Fourth, we will have a short check-in meeting with administration on Thursday, May 20, and then will schedule full bargaining sessions beginning the week of June 1.

How are decisions made as we bargain?

We will ensure that agreements we reach have the support of the nurses. It is likely they will be put to a formal vote of the CED and AED staff. If we know that we have consensus from our
meetings and communications, we may use another approach, depending on the issue. It is essential that everyone be receiving ONA emails to their non-Providence email to stay informed. We use primarily email updates and if you miss messages, you miss your chance to have your voice heard.

If you have any questions, please contact your ONA Providence St. Vincent executive team officers at APRNemail@gmail.com.