Providence COVID-19 Bargaining Updates

Your ONA bargaining unit leaders within the Providence system have continued to negotiate with Providence Oregon Region management over a renewed COVID-19 memorandum of understanding (MOU). At the end of June, your ONA bargaining unit leaders made a counterproposal to management on the COVID-19 MOU.

We are seeking:

• Emergency COVID-19 leave.
• Short term disability-style benefits for COVID-19 illnesses.
• Immediate COVID-19 exposure notices and presumption for workers’ compensation coverage for COVID-19.
• Critical protections for vulnerable nurses.

Nurses continue to experience an increase in COVID-19 cases, limited personal protective equipment (PPE), and greater risk to nurses who are treating those patients.

Our proposed MOU seeks to provide what we see as minimum protections, especially 80-hours of COVID-19 illness leave for nurses who contract COVID-19. We were hopeful that Providence would agree to these basic protections. However, in late July we received a response to our proposal which rejected our demand for 80-hour COVID-19 illness leave and rejected presumption for workers compensation coverage for COVID-19.

Readers may recall the July 29 Willamette Week article that identified Sedgwick / Providence’s denial of Workers’ Compensation Claims by employees greatly exceeded the average for other employers in Oregon. [Read it here.]

Providence has agreed that nurses with likely exposure to COVID-19 positive patients will have N-95 or better mask protection and that nurses who have unprotected COVID-19 exposures will be notified of the exposure within 24 hours.

The bargaining unit leaders have evaluated Providence’s proposal and are finalizing our counterproposal to present at our next meeting with Providence, on August 19.


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ONA/PSVMC
Executive Committee

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**PROTECT PEOPLE NOT PROFITS**
Management announced on July 23 that they would be changing the care model to move PIV catheter insertion to the Med-Surg Telemetry Division (Card A & B, Med A & B, Surgical Unit, Oncology, Ortho, Neuro, and the Med-Surg Float Pool), impacting those units and the IV Therapy team.

To read the information we received from Providence about this announcement, go to:


Our union has given notice to HR/Management that we want to meet and discuss. We have begun forming an ONA nurse-led team to meet with management, have scheduled our first meeting for August 16, and are now working to engage all affected Med-Surg Telemetry nurses. If you are interested in participating, please contact Sally LaJoie, Anne Byles or Julia Trist.

We have heard from both the IV team and Med-Surg / Telemetry RNs that there are many questions and concerns, including:

- What is the training plan for the non-IV Therapy trainee-RNs? How will they be evaluated, and by whom?

- Who will be the IV trainer-RNs, what will the IV unit’s staffing be like during this process, will the trainers receive preceptor differential or other compensation?

- Is the increased workload being taken into account? Will this impact the unit Staffing Plans?

- What is the methodology of evaluation of new program, including nurse involvement in determining what success looks like?

- How are we ensuring we have solid staffing levels for the IV Therapy team moving forward?

It’s important we understand what concerns everyone has about this change so we can incorporate that into our conversations with management.

We will open up a general members survey as this plan moves forward to gather feedback. If you have concerns in the meantime, please contact an officer or any member of your special ONA Team that will be meeting with administration: Anne Byles (Steward / IV Therapy), Mike Ferguson (IV Therapy), Tiffany Tarabochia (Steward / IV Therapy), Stephanie Tanner (CDU / ONA Officer at Large), Sally LaJoie (ONA Labor Staff), Julia Trist (ONA organizer).
Grievance Updates

Extra Shift Grievance Step Two Meetings Held, Providence Responses will be issued August 21.

Our June 19 newsletter gave an overview of these important grievances. We met with administration the first week of August. We presented our positions and rationale under the contract language for why Providence’s actions violated our contract.

For the 4-hour shift grievance, the contract (App. A, Sec. E) clearly states that “A nurse will be paid a differential of $18.00 per hour for all hours worked per week in excess of thirty-six (36), when such excess hours result from the nurse agreeing to work an extra shift of at least four (4) hours in duration at the request of the Medical Center.”

If a nurse is not needed, and clocks out 8 or 26 minutes early (as happened in these cases), that does not give Providence the right to take away the premium pay for the entire extra shift. This is both unfair and creates and incentivizes a waste of resources for employees to stay on the clock when they are not needed for the final part of the shift.

The second grievance is for what we are calling “fragmented shifts.” This is filed for nurses that do not reach the 36-hour threshold until mid-way through the extra shift. Providence is taking the position that it will not pay extra shift premium for any part of that extra shift, even after the nurse reaches the 36 hours. To reduce a nurse’s anticipated pay for the entire extra shift is unfair, and disincentivizes staff from signing up for extra shifts.

Welcome New Stewards and Executive Officer!

Stephanie Tanner (CDU night shift Steward) was appointed to fill the Member at Large vacancy on our local Executive Committee officer team.

The following new Stewards were confirmed by a majority vote of their units last month:

- CC Float Pool - Joan Irwin
- PICU - Molly McMillon
- SSU - Sam Navlyt, Daniel Taylor
- Labor & Delivery - Alayna Haskins
- PICU & IP Peds - Amanda Schumaker
- Outpatient Eye - Joanne Donato

We are still missing the following union stewards in these departments, please let us know if you are interested in stepping up or have questions about the role: CVL, PSCU, Children’s Float, Neuro 6E, ADU, Peds Surgery, Pre-Admit Clinic. There is no limit to the number of stewards that may serve on a unit, and our goal is to have a minimum of 1 steward per unit, and shift (day/night).
Apply for Pandemic Assistance or Unemployment Benefits Today

Lost Hours?
Nurses across the country are losing hours due to COVID-19. We led the nation by winning critical COVID-19 contract protections including 80 hours of sick leave and administrative pay. However, Providence has let those protections expire.

We are fighting to win back key COVID-19 provisions for nurses at the bargaining table but we are also exploring new options to support you, including encouraging nurses to apply for unemployment benefits or pandemic unemployment assistance.

If you’re being low censused you may qualify for either benefit.

Unemployment Benefits
If you are losing hours and worked at least 500 hours last year OR earned more than $1,000 last year and worked throughout the year, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

For most nurses, if you were paid less than $648 in a week, you’re likely eligible. Note: Unemployment is not a substitute for paid leave. If you used paid leave to fill in for hours you would normally be working, unemployment benefits will not cover those hours.

Benefits range from $151/week to $648/week per person. Individuals are eligible to receive 1.25 percent of your yearly earnings per week.


Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
Even if you don’t qualify for regular unemployment benefits, people out of work due to COVID-19 are eligible for pandemic assistance.

Assistance ranges from $205/week to $648/week. You can receive 1.25 percent of your yearly earnings per week.

How Do I Apply? Apply for pandemic unemployment assistance click here, or go to: https://govstatus.egov.com/PUA

Please note that this is not legal advice. This summary is based on our understanding of Employment Department rules. If you have a legal question, you should speak with an attorney. ONA members receive a free half-hour consultation with a local law firm as a member benefit.

Contact information is available at the ONA website. www.oregonrn.org/485

ONA Virtual House of Delegates
To ensure the health and safety of our members through the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA made the decision to hold the ONA House of Delegates virtually on Sept. 22, 2020.

Click here to learn more and register today or go to www.OregonRN.org/Events