CVOR Staffing Plan Vote Reaches Second Impasse

Issue involves charge nurse skills on call shifts, next step is mediation

The Housewide Staffing Committee (HWSC) met on Sept. 17 and had another robust discussion about the skills needed and requested by the Cardiovascular Operating Room (CVOR) staff for their call team in their staffing plan. The nurses first asked that the call team include a charge or relief charge nurse, that failed a vote. Then they proposed that the second circulator nurse on call possess the skill-set of a core or relief charge. The management team asked the nurses to exclude any reference to the skills of a charge from the plan and instead attached a list of enhanced skills needed. They explained that they believe the job description of a relief/core charge nurse does not define the skills and competencies of a charge nurse.

Confused? So were we.

Here’s why: St. Vincent Medical Center (PSVMC) has a problem because the contract requires every unit to have a charge and a staff nurse to be open to provide patient care. Your contract has had similar language since it was first bargained in 1978. There are some exceptions (where a charge could be shared or a unit combined), but they do not apply to this very specialized unit. After changing from the Heart & Vascular Institute management to the Surgical Services division, the CVOR nurses have experienced many changes. Last fall they had enough of feeling unsafe on call-back cases, and filed a grievance to demand that a relief or charge nurse be staffed on call shifts.

We are scheduled to arbitrate the grievance on Wed., Feb. 12, 2020.

Since the contract language doesn’t require a charge when the unit is not open, SVMC says that the grievance is meritless. Another stated reason is that the CVOR’s staffing plan doesn’t include a charge nurse for call teams. This is confusing because since early 2019, the CVOR staffing committee has been working on their plan, and each draft includes the addition of a charge/relief charge on call shifts. This has failed to gain support from management and failed votes of the HWSC throughout the summer.

We are now at the end of the 30-day period and will proceed to mediation through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). This is a new process and was added when the staffing law was amended by the legislature in 2015. We have not used the mediation process yet therefore we expect that with the OHA’s lack of staff, it will not be as rapid as we would like. However, we’ll keep you updated when mediation begins.

Questions? Contact a HWSC Member, Megan Fong (ONA CVOR RN/officer at large), or ONA labor representative.

Please click here to read the Oregon Administrative Rules that apply.
We are writing as your elected ONA officers to notify you of a change to the contract involving part-time nurses and mandatory low census order.

Our contract has a low census process that sends staff home in a particular order. First, cost to employer, then using volunteers, next resource, and finally mandatory based upon the nurse’s factor.

A number of nurses came forward because they were being sent home on mandatory low census when they had not worked their full time equivalent (FTE), while a part-time nurse working beyond their FTE is still working. The officers and administration discussed this in labor management task force and how to address the situation.

What is the change? The change to the contract would be to send a part-time nurse that has signed up for an additional shift (non-overtime and not premium/incentive) home after a resource nurse that has worked 24 hours in the week. It also clarifies that a nurse earning an extra shift but not overtime would be mandatoried. This is a very unusual situation but was not captured in the current contract language.

Why the change? Currently, a part-time nurse working extra is sent home after a full time nurse who has not worked their full hours/FTE that week, because the extra shift is not premium and they do not get overtime.

This is in our contract on pg 54-55.

The new language/order will be (underlined language in sections h and i are NEW).

G. Low Census Process:
1. Low Census will be assigned in the following sequence within the cluster (and within unit in the surgical clusters) where the need for Low Census is identified in the following order:
   a. Agency Nurses (Travelers, Per Diem or Guaranteed)
   b. Temporary Nurses (A nurse employed by the Medical Center for less than 6 months)
   c. Share Care Nurses
   d. Nurses earning overtime and extra shift incentive pay
   e. Nurses earning overtime without extra shift incentive pay
   f. Nurses earning extra shift incentive pay without overtime
   g. Volunteers, with preference given to standby volunteers
   h. Resource RNs (0.0 FTE) (After working 24 hours that week)
   i. Part-time nurses working an extra shift without extra shift incentive pay or overtime
   j. Resource RNs (0.0 FTE) (Working less than 24 hours that week)
   k. Mandatory Low Census

Please let an officer or labor representative know if you have any feedback or questions.

Working as a Charge or Relief Charge is Voluntary

Nurses have reported feeling pressured to act as relief charge and asked whether they can be required to work as a relief charge nurse. The answer is that it is a voluntary role and a manager cannot require a nurse to act as relief charge. If you have concerns, please feel free to contact HR, or contact an ONA officer, unit steward or staff labor representative.
A grievance was filed in May 2019 by ONA because nurses discovered that they were not receiving certification pay despite their prior submission of evidence. We have agreed to settle the grievance. In reviewing this matter, we learned that there were process changes on how to submit evidence of certification which were not widely communicated. Nurses thought they were submitting evidence appropriately. However, the certification did not go through to processing and payment was not initiated.

To resolve the grievance, nurses impacted by the changes in the certification pay process since Sept. 1, 2018 are eligible to be paid their missing certification pay from the date their pay ended, retroactive to the start of the pay period following submission of their documentation to PSVMC.

**To be paid any lost certification pay, nurses must be within the claims period and must submit required documentation by Tuesday, Oct. 15.**

For more information about the claims period and process, please [click here](#).

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**Take Education Fund Survey NOW**

**Survey closes Oct. 4, your input needed**

Our contract is in effect until December 31, 2021, but it contains a “re-opener” for the Education Fund and Leave (Article XIV.C, pg. 42-44). We are conducting a survey of all the nurses at PSVMC to determine what is important for us to pursue in negotiations.

To take the survey, please [click here](#).

For more information about bargaining, read the Sept. 10 newsletter on your bargaining unit webpage.

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**Changes to Flu Season Enforcement**

In the last newsletter, we gave updates about the change in enforcement. To read that update please [click here](#).

(Page 2 of the Sept. 10, 2019 newsletter)

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**Reminder: Certification Pay Grievance Claims Period Open until Tuesday, Oct. 15**

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**Oregon Nurses Make A Difference**

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(Page 2 of the Sept. 10, 2019 newsletter)

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**Oregon Nurses Make A Difference**
Staffing Education & Advocacy Training

Have you recently been elected to your hospital’s staffing committee or do you desire to be a more prepared and effective staffing advocate? If so, we encourage you to take a SEAT with ONA for our online Staffing Education & Advocacy Training (SEAT). This is the only comprehensive staffing law training in Oregon and is available online through our OCEAN platform. It is available 24/7 and can be taken at your own pace. It is free for ONA members and available to non-members at a discounted price.

Nurses can earn 2.25 continuing nursing education contact hours for completion of the entire SEAT series.

Visit [www.OregonRN.org/OnlineCE](http://www.OregonRN.org/OnlineCE) to get started.

| Part 1: Oregon’s Nurse Staffing Law |
| Part 2: How to Write a Better Nurse Staffing Committee Charter |
| Part 3: How to Write a Better Staffing Plan |
| Part 4: Staffing Committee Orientation |

Oregon Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

ONA/Providence Wide Steward Training

Date: Thursday, Oct. 24, 2019
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Location: ONA Headquarters
18765 SW Boones Ferry Road
Tualatin, OR 97062

What makes a union strong? Nurses like you enforcing our contract!

Come to this informative training and become a union Steward. Stewards ensure that the contract is being followed by representing their co-workers in investigatory meetings, grievance meetings and knowing their rights.

Please RSVP by Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 by emailing your labor representative Sally at LaJoie@OregonRN.org

Lunch will be provided