What’s At Stake

More than 100 people showed up last Friday, May 1, to demand Oregon Health and Science University Hillsboro (OHSU-H) (formerly Tuality) respect nurses! Since then, OHSU-H administration has been on the defensive and creating confusion about what’s happened in negotiations, but the messages from ONA nurses remain clear: OHSU-H is proposing major takeaways without giving us much in return. Our bargaining priorities are and will continue to be the following:

- Making break relief nurses a permanent part of contract and expanding the program so more nurses get actual, full, uninterrupted breaks
- Maintaining extended illness hours (EIH) benefits
- Stop OHSU-H’s continued push to limit our ability to take time off
- Limits to floating
- A stronger union via full membership
- Limits to call
- Programs and ideas that better recruit and retain quality nurses
- Bringing Geri Psych and other inpatient new units into the contract

Following are re-caps of a few major items currently at stake:

Extended Illness Hours (EIH) Program

ONA: Extended leave is important!

ONA rejected OHSU-H’s EIH package proposal. One by one, each member of the bargaining team shared stories from co-workers about what EIH means to nurses and the devastating impact it would have to lose it. Some expressed that it felt like “a slap in the face” and that OHSU-H should be ashamed to even try to take it away. Our team told OHSU-H administration that this is a non-starter and gave them a counter proposal that simply said it is rejected.

OHSU-H: “EIH is a liability,” “We are disappointed” that the nurses are asking for a type of sick leave

OHSU-H made it very clear their priority is to dissolve the EIH program in its entirety. They simply and clearly said “It’s a liability.” Their proposal is to remove EIH and replace it with STD insurance. STD would pay only 60 percent of your salary, unless staff bought an additional STD for a maximum pay out of 66 percent of your pay. STD would pay for leave AFTER you’ve been out for two weeks. OHSU-H administration proposed to add 16 PLH hours and two federal holidays (MLK Day and Presidents’ Day).
Extended Illness Hours (EIH) Program (continued from page 1)

In our most recent package, we said we were willing to accept the short-term disability (STD) program only if we had sick leave to bridge the two-week gap before short-term disability kicks in, and to be able to accrue a few weeks to care for loved ones. That’s when OHSU-H walked away from negotiations and said, “We are disappointed.”

We tried to work out a compromise and they just walked away. Now, because it was a part of a package, we can go back to our original position of rejecting their EIH proposal and work from there. With the great showing on May 1, the members are saying loud and clear that EIH and hours for illness leave are important!

STD only covers YOU and it cannot be used for any type of family leave. Also, STD is not guaranteed in all circumstances and can be denied by the insurance company. It also cannot be used for shorter than 14-day leaves, and many popular coverages like paternity leave—all of which are covered by EIH. STD does not cover taking care of a sick loved one or child.

After hearing our feedback, OHSU-H counter proposed that nurses with accrued EIH will not lose their accruals, but that EIH will end.

Break Relief Nurses (BLT)

ONA: BLT should be in the contract.

Make the current BLT position a permanent part of the contract.

In our latest package, we were willing to live with the BLT program being in another memorandum of understanding (MOU), which is just kicking the can down the road to fight for in two years with the MOU having a “sunset date” for the program and does not guarantee the program beyond that.

Again, we tried to work out a compromise, but they just walked away, so we can return to our previous position of demanding the BLT position be in the contract.

OHSU-H: “We want flexibility.”

Make break relief at managers’ discretion, take away a dollar an hour from the premium (from $3 to $2), and make it an assignment and not a position. Current BLT positions would discontinue through attrition.

OHSU-H continually uses the talking point that they are expanding the BLT program. This appears to be in regards to having BLT’s for Geri Psych and NICU/Peds—something that the contract would already cover. It’s not really an expansion if it’s just honoring the contract.

In their latest package they proposed just another MOU for two years for what we have now, and simply refused to memorialize this incredibly popular program in the contract.

Geri Psych Benefit Accruals

ONA: Keep your promise.

Restore the benefits, accruals, seniority, etc. that former Forest Grove Geri Psych employees lost. Promises weren’t kept. It wasn’t nurses’ fault that construction took longer than expected!

OHSU-H: “It’s a legal liability.”

Rejected restoring lost benefits to nurses who were promised that benefits would be restored when they were rehired. OHSU-H just stated, “It’s too much of a legal liability.”

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### Vacation

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<th>ONA: Access to earned time off is important.</th>
<th>OHSU-H: We want to limit your ability to take a vacation because “it’s a burden” on us when you are on time off.</th>
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<td>Expansion of vacation time to be more equitable by including evening shifts. Many nurses in larger departments struggle to find available times to take time off.</td>
<td>OHSU-H administration initially proposed drastically cutting in half by proposing two off per day as opposed to the current two per shift the ability for nurses to take time off. They said, “It put too much of a burden on the hospital” to fill those open shifts. We tried to remind them that is why they have budgeted variable, part-time, and per-diem nurses. They still tried to move forward with their initial proposal.</td>
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<td>Their latest package was a compromise in their eyes, but would only revert back to current contract language. To us, that isn’t a compromise, it’s just the status quo.</td>
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Our ONA bargaining team is committed to ensuring that all of our voices are heard at the table, and nurses across the hospital are committed to taking the steps necessary to ensure we win a great contract. We look forward to hearing from OHSU-H to get back to the table.

### Petition to Governor Brown to Stand with Health Care Workers

For more than a month, frontline Oregon health care workers and their unions have fought 24/7 for the minimum of COVID-19 protections. However, the vast majority of hospitals, clinics, and health care facilities in Oregon have refused to agree to emergency COVID-19 protections for health care workers. After our courageous health care workers helped flatten the curve to delay Oregon’s surge, it is critical that employers treat their workers with the respect and dignity they deserve and do everything in their power to protect nurses, first responders and all essential workers.

That’s why we’re asking Governor Kate Brown to insist that health care employers come to the table with their workers and get COVID-19 protections in place before the lives of Oregon health care providers are lost.

Sign the petition to urge Governor Brown to intervene in this extraordinary public health and workers’ rights emergency. We need every employer to help protect all nurses! Stand with all frontline health care workers in Oregon.

[Click here to sign the petition](#)
Nurses Week is a time we celebrate the profession of nursing and honor the life-saving work done by every nurse in every practice. This year is especially meaningful as nurses across the country are on the front lines of a global pandemic, dedicated to fighting COVID-19 and protecting our communities.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) called for 2020 to be the Year of the Nurse and we didn’t know how true this would be. Nurses have shown they are the backbone of our health care system and work hard every day on behalf of our patients and our communities.

In Oregon, ONA nurses stand together to advocate for safer working conditions and fight for proper PPE to protect all health care workers and our patients.

This Nurses Week, May 6-12, we honor the dedication of ONA nurses! While we may not be able to hold celebrations together, we will celebrate throughout the week with various events online and some bargaining units will hold small celebrations where they can.

Thank you for everything you do, every day, every week. We will continue to stand together because together, we are ONA.

OregonRN.org/NursesWeek2020

Wednesday, May 6:
We Are ONA Nurses Week video

Thursday, May 7:
The Fight For PPE:
How ONA Came Together

Friday, May 8:
Special Messages from ONA leaders

Saturday, May 9 - Sunday, May 10
Nurses, Political Power, and COVID

Monday, May 11
The ONA Difference

Tuesday, May 12
Moving ONA into Our Future