Update from March 25 Virtual Session

- **Weekend work.** Our bargaining team continued to push for the ability for nurses to be able to take a few APL days on weekends they are scheduled to work throughout the year without having to find their own coverage. Administration maintains that this is just too hard and would lead to the hospital being short-staffed – our team disagrees.

- **Protected absences.** Our team believes that both full- and part-time nurses should have adequate ability to accommodate life circumstances that take them away from work without being penalized. Administration countered with a proposal that mirrors the status quo.

- **New Employee Orientations & release time for Stewards.** Administration’s latest proposals on Article 2 made some gratifying movement towards acknowledging our union and its importance moving forward at Unity – a guaranteed 15-minute union orientation for new employees and release time for union stewards to attend investigatory meetings. We didn’t come to a tentative agreement yet, but we are looking forward to continuing to discuss this and the other issues in this article.

- **Mediation.** Our bargaining team approached administration’s team about starting the mediation process. Mediation is a voluntary process that brings a third-party federal mediator in to help move towards a final contract. Our teams are currently in conversation with a mediator and are looking to schedule mediation bargaining dates towards the end of April. We support all tools to help get the contract nurses need, but this does not change our plans to continue our campaign to show Unity nurses are standing together and willing to take action on the issues that matter most to us and our patients.

Day of Action

**Nurses serve 10-Day notice of action to Melissa Eckstein**

Nearly 20 nurses and staff showed up to Melissa Eckstein’s office today to deliver our official 10-day notice that nurses will be taking action on Wednesday, April 7.

President Eckstein refused to come out and meet the delegation. This is emblematic of Legacy’s continued refusal to acknowledge that Unity nurses and staff are demanding they do better, for frontline healthcare caregivers and their patients.

It is up to us to hold Unity administration accountable, make sure you sign-up for the Day of Action!
Take Action Now – Day of Action, April 7

Our bargaining team is calling on all nurses to take action to show Unity we are standing firm on patient safety and respect for nurses! It’s critical that we continue to exercise our power as a union—nurses taking action together—so the Unity administration understands we’re not backing down on the issues that matter most to nurses.

Participate in our Candlelight Vigil at 6 – 8 p.m. and SEIU’s Info Picket at 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. PLEASE SIGN UP HERE, or go to www.OregonRN.org/unityday and RSVP today.

Make Your Voice Heard on Staffing

The Oregon Hospital Nurse Staffing Law ensures all nurses have a voice when it comes to creating a staffing plan and that the plan meets our patients’ needs. Staffing representatives from Unity attend quarterly meetings to review and approve plans, review staffing iCares, patient outcomes, staffing complaints, any deviation from the plan, and staff overtime.

Unity staffing representatives care about staff and patient outcomes. They take their role on the staffing committee seriously and do not want to be used by management as placeholders for committee meetings. They want to participate and expect true collaboration on the staffing plan in accordance with the law. During our last staffing committee meeting, a motion was approved that allows additional time for management and staffing representatives to gather information from staff to make suggestions and changes to the nurse-patient ratios on the staffing plan. This is an opportunity for all staff nurses to speak about concerns they have regarding how units are staffed and how staffing affects patient outcomes.

From November 2020 to January 2021, Unity nurses appropriately filed Staffing Request Documentation Forms (SRDF) and staffing iCares to help identify sequelae that occur when we are not operating within our plan or when the patients’ needs supersede current staffing availability to deliver needed care. The nurse staffing law is clear that these concerns must be reviewed at the staffing committee meetings.

On March 10 nurses attempted to speak about trends that affect all nurses and patients at Unity when we are not staffed at a level to provide safe care. We were interrupted and disrespected.

These concerning trends can be found in our recently published report here or you can see the full report at www.OregonRN.org/unity.

Unity staffing reps and managers will reconvene in April with the Legacy Emanuel Medical Center (LEMC) Staffing Committee to review and vote to approve staffing plans. Please reach out to your respective representative with your feedback. For additional information about the staffing law visit: www.oregonrn.org/113.

We know that Unity is an integral part of the Portland community and we would like for it to continue to be that way. Unity’s goal is to be a trend setter in mental health. To do this we must be staffed adequately. Let your staffing representatives know that our staffing plans do not reflect safe care.

In solidarity,

Sarah Mittelman, BS, RN CEN, PES
Tracie Henry, RN PED/Adolescents
Naba Kanteh, RN 1 West
Lisa Briggs, RN1 East
Paul Odders, RN Unit 5
Leslie Fischer, RN Unit 2