



Oregon Nurses Association

May 31, 2019

Unity Center for Behavioral Health (UCBH) Newsletter Issue #4

Voice of Oregon Nurses Since 1904

Legacy, Let Us Vote!

The arguments are in. Now, we wait.

A regional director from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is currently reviewing the testimony and evidence that was presented by ONA and the employer during our three-day hearing last week. We expect a decision to be made within the next couple of weeks about the scope of our ONA bargaining unit, and about the fate of our vote.

Our position has not changed. As the nurses of Unity, we share a community of interest with one another- in terms of the work we do and the patients we serve.

The employer continues to cling to their position; that nurses at Emanuel, Randall Children's Hospital, and other "satellite" facilities and clinics should be included in our bargaining unit.

We agree that nurses at other Legacy facilities should have a right to decide whether or not to be part of a union- but that is a decision those nurses will need to

make for themselves.

We remain confident that the NLRB will recognize the bright lines between our respective groups, and that we will be allowed to proceed with our election. This is merely a strategy by Legacy to slow down our effort, so that they have more time to convince us that a union is not necessary. That we are a big, happy family. That the door has always been open for us to raise concerns.

The truth is, we've been calling attention to problems at Unity since the doors opened more than two years ago. Gaslighting us won't erase the more than 300 assaults and 23 injuries we experienced during the first seven months of our doors being open. We raised our voices countless times, asking for more staff, safer policies, and better procedures.

We've begged for administration to listen to our suggestions for how to make Unity safer – for

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I'm Voting Yes: Julianne Christopherson

This week, we interviewed Julianne Christopherson an RN on Unit 6, who has been with Unity since the facility opened. We asked Julianne about her experience as a nurse, her motivation behind doing this work, and her reasons for supporting a union at Unity.

Julianne has been a nurse for 10 years, and says she felt called to this work since an early age. She remembers helping others as a young child, especially kids who had disabilities at school. Before coming to Unity, she worked at Randall Children's Hospital on the adolescent mental health unit, then briefly in the Emergency Room. Prior to that, she worked at Parry Center for Children, where she and other employees were represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 49.

What's your favorite part of being a nurse?

"I love being able to pass on skills to kids that they can use the rest of their life. These skills can allow them to regulate their emotions, stay safe, create positive relationships and advocate for themselves and loved ones. This is the important work that we do with the kids while they are in our care. I also like helping parents learn to be more empathetic with their kids, to help them have a better relationship with them, and support them in staying safe."

What's the most challenging part of being a nurse?

"The aggressive behavior and managing that safely. Teaching other staff that their safety is the most important. I think a lot of people put the patient first and are scared to defend or stand up for themselves."

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Legacy, Let Us Vote! (continued from page 1)

ourselves, and for our patients. We're tired of being told that we should be content with token positions on "shared governance" committees.

We are forming our union because we want REAL shared governance. We are fighting for a real voice in decisions at work; about our practice as nurses; our wages, our benefits and our working conditions. Through our union contract, we will finally have a

legally-binding mechanism to negotiate as equals.

We want more than a promise – we want real power.

Enough is enough. It's time for Legacy to stop stalling. Let us vote!

Coworkers Standing Together

Amy Loaiza shares her story of her coworkers standing together



Amy Loaiza

Amy is a psychiatric nurse and a 17-year ONA member in the behavioral health unit at Providence Portland Medical Center (PPMC).

Amy worked in the mental health field before she got her BSN in nursing. She sees mental health as her calling because she feels connected with the work.

Just like many of us, Amy attends her kid's school

activities and is very involved in their sports. Amy also loves to run and enjoys meditating.

When asked what her favorite part of being a nurse is she said: "It's getting to help people in a time when they're in such crisis. I can help them be safe and get through this. I know the work is so challenging because what worked yesterday, may not work today. I have to be fully present with the patient to help them get through this moment or the day. I love seeing them get well."

Amy joined our meeting on May 13 to show her support and share her story of how organizing made a difference on her unit.

"I've definitely seen the difference. When we did not organize to come together as group and utilize our voice together, we did not accomplish

anything. We asked for changes on our unit that dealt with the conditions of the unit and safety of our patients for years. It wasn't until we all organized — nurses, mental health therapists, doctors, unit secretaries

— that management listened. Before we organized, we had so much pushback and knew we were just trying to do the right thing. We were told by management our changes were 'not in the budget'. The hospital wants to do the right thing too, but they have a different point of view that I respect and appreciate. However, they must hear the people on the floor and bedside doing the work. We made a lot of good changes because we came with solutions to our problems, in an organized way. We made the unit safer. *Most times you don't get heard*

unless you organize. The moment we organized with every single person they had no choice other than to listen.

"This is how you can get things done and how important it is to your profession. In nursing school, they always say that nurses are the last person to make sure the patients is safe. That is true in a broader perspective.

Making sure that your unit is safe and that you're doing everything you can, so you protect them while in your care is also part of it."

Why should Unity nurses vote Yes to join ONA?

"All you're asking for is to do the right thing by patients. This is not about the money. Voting yes is about protecting patients, nurses and making sure that an organized group of nurses have the ability to

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Coworkers Standing Together (continued from page 2)

talk to someone that makes the decisions at the hospital and have an equal voice while doing so. **Voting Yes** means you're a part of larger professional organization and union that pushes for better laws and union contracts to protect

your unit, patients and of course you, as a licensed professional.

It's also about doing things the right way, not because it's more cost-effective for the hospital.

I encourage you to vote yes for

ONA. I look forward to you joining me and other nurses like me in our effort to make a difference in our patients' lives."

I'm voting Yes: Julianne Christopherson (continued from page 1)

I think that's probably the most important thing you can do - as they say on airline flights - put your oxygen mask on first before helping others secure theirs. If we are not safe as staff, we cannot help our patients. With this said, sometimes there are particular things we cannot prepare for and there is no way we can prevent those assaults, but I feel like these are few and far between."

Are there things about Unity that make the work environment challenging?

"Yes. I'd say management in particular is not listening to staff concerns. One thing that I brought up is that there are rocks in the patient courtyard are very sharp – almost like arrowheads or razor blades. We don't allow weapons on our unit, we don't allow anything sharp, we don't allow much metal on the units, But then there are these rocks that patients have access to almost every day. We have a low level of supervision in the courtyard – patients don't get searched or anything when they come back. I've brought this up, I've written iCares on it, I've gone through all the right avenues, and it's been multiple months, likely more than a year, and the rocks are still there.

It's also quite frustrating that we have to find our own coverage for the unit when we want to use our vacation



Julianne before she entered the federal building to testify at the National Labor Relations Board hearing on Wednesday, May 22, 2019.

to get weekends off. It's ridiculous. It does not provide the self-care that we need to provide to staff to allow them to come to work ready to provide the best care possible to our patients. It's not OK. There are people out there looking to just work weekends. Hire them."

Why are you voting yes for ONA?

"I want to have more of say in policies and procedures, particularly things regarding safety and weekend coverage. I want floor staff to be sitting in on all those "manager meetings" and administrative decisions. I feel like we will prevent a lot of errors, waste less money and create a safer environment when we have a seat at the table. I think its baloney that we have to cover our own weekends. It creates an unfair and unsafe working environment for employees and doesn't encourage self-care. Taking care of yourself is at the heart of providing good care for others."

Why do you think other nurses should vote yes for ONA?

"I hope people see that having a union to represent us will help us to have a better seat at the table and more say over what happens at Unity, our lives and our work-life balance. I want managers and administration to listen to our concerns, particularly about safety."

ONA Oregon Nurses Association
Voice of Oregon Nurses Since 1904

Upcoming Speakers

Monday, June 3

Maria Barnes, Behavioral Health RN, Rogue Regional Medical Center (Medford, OR)

Tom Doyle, ONA's legal counsel from the firm of Bennett Hartman Morris & Kaplan will be present from 8:15 to 9:15 p.m.

Monday, June 10

Deborah Riddick, JD, RN
ONA Director of Health Policy and Government Relations

Monday, June 17

TBD

Colleagues in solidarity on Unit 5 wearing our ONA "We Stand Together" stickers.



(L - R) Christine Allen, Kristen Sharp, Sarah Mittelman

Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming ONA Meetings – Every Monday

Stop by for as long as you're able. These meetings are where we talk about next steps in our campaign, answer questions, and build a shared vision for improving our workplace.



Monday, June 3

Where?

When?

Monday, June 10

The Encorepreneur Café

Drop-in from
5:45 to 9:00 p.m.

Monday, June 17

1548 NE 15th Ave

Monday, June 24

Portland, OR

More Coverage of Our Campaign

Portland Tribune [CLICK HERE](#) or go to www.pamplinmedia.com and search for Unity.

To view previous Unity Newsletters online, click on the links below:

[Unity Issue #1](#)

[Unity Issue #2](#)

[Unity Issue #3](#)

Unity nurses were featured on OPB's Think Out Loud last week. To listen to the podcast, [CLICK HERE](#) or go to www.spreaker.com and search on the story Unity Center nurses vote to unionize.

Questions or want more information about ONA - contact Annabel Torres
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