Congratulations! Nurses Win ONA Our ONA Election

Tonight we won our ONA union election.

On June 19, 2019, an NLRB election was held at the hospital with voting sessions open to staff nurses over 3 sessions. At 8:30pm, the vote was closed and the Board agent counted the ballots.

The results: Nurses at Unity voted by an overwhelming majority to be represented by ONA. Thank you to all the nurses who stepped up and exercised their right to vote. Your voice was greatly appreciated.

Now that the hard work of getting to an election is done, it is time to embark on the next phase of this process—negotiating a contract. This will help capture current practices that work and improve those that don’t in a legally binding agreement for nurses now and in the future.

Updates on next steps coming soon!

What’s Next?

Based on all our conversations, there are many concerns we want to address in our first contract. To name a few: safety, staffing levels, lack of input, due process, job security, and nurse retention. To begin the negotiation process, we need to identify and prioritize the issues. The first way we do that is by actively voicing our concerns through the ONA bargaining survey.

More info on that soon. In order to get these pieces moving, we need to adopt bylaws, nominate and elect officers for our bargaining team. Join us for the upcoming ONA meeting to kick off this next exciting step.

Our Conversation with County Commissioners

We continue to meet with Multnomah County Commissioners. Commission Chair Deborah Kafoury plans to join us at one of our next Monday regular meetings. It is our opportunity to share our victory with our local leaders and to share our perspective and ask the County to urge Unity not to waste any more valuable time and resources on an appeal. Unity needs to respect the NLRB’s decision. We voted yes and they need to respect our vote.

Please RSVP for the meetings by contacting Annabel Torres: (503) 309-3359 or torres@oregonrn.org.

Upcoming ONA Meetings

Join us to discuss and plan what’s next for our new bargaining unit.

**Monday, June 24**  ●  6 – 8:30 p.m.

**Monday, July 1**  ●  6 – 8:30 p.m.

The Encorepreneur Café
1548 NE 15th Avenue, Portland, Oregon

Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson Meeting

**Wednesday, June 26**  ●  Updated Time 1:45-2:30 p.m.

Multnomah Building (meet in lobby)
501 SE Hawthorne
Overview of Negotiations

Negotiating is a skill we use all the time, for a car price or with our kids. Negotiating a union contract uses similar skills, but differs in some significant ways. First, it is a process governed by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Second, when negotiating a union contract, the team members are not just negotiating for themselves. They are negotiating for all staff nurses at the hospital. Third, if we feel management is being unreasonable, we can’t just walk away. Both management and nurses must try in good faith to reach an agreement.

Main Elements of Negotiating

The Law: Both sides must negotiate in good faith: NLRA, Section 8(d): “For the purposes of this section, to bargain collectively is the performance of the mutual obligation of the employer and the representative of the employees to meet at reasonable times and confer in good faith with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, or the negotiation of an agreement or any question arising thereunder, and the execution of a written contract incorporating any agreement reached if requested by either party, but such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession…”

Examples of Bad Faith bargaining:

1) Surface bargaining or “take-it-or-leave-it” approach,
2) Regressive bargaining (moving backwards in the bargaining process,
3) Failure or refusal to provide information that is needed by the negotiation committee to draft, evaluate and respond to proposals,
4) Violating any ground rules established by the parties.

Leverage: In union contract negotiations, our leverage is where we can impact the things that the employer cares about. The hospital cannot run without nurses and nurses are not easy to replace. So management has a vested interest in trying to reach agreement with us because nurses help:

- Keep the census up
- Efficient operations
- Maintain public image
- Have adequate staff

Relationships: We work with the people on the other side of the negotiating table and therefore have some insight into whether some managers have the ability to influence other members of their team. We can assess what kinds of approaches are likely to get a positive response. Both sides usually want to avoid adversarial behavior because when the contract is finalized, we want to have professional relationship to return to.

Keys to a Successful Contract Negotiation

A Unified Team: A unified negotiating committee is that makes decisions based on the priorities of the bargaining unit as a whole is critical. The team makes decisions by consensus and avoids a divided front.

Good Communication: Each nurse should participate in the ONA negotiation survey so that the committee knows what nurses want and how to prioritize those issues. The bargaining team shares draft proposals and priorities with nurses before negotiations begin. The team also gives an update on negotiations after each bargaining session to keep everyone in the loop.

RN Participation: When RNs show visible interest and support for the bargaining team, it provides the team with the leverage necessary to accomplish our goals. RNs also give feedback to the committee to help with making tough decisions.