Management Asserts Protecting Traveler’s Time A Priority Over Staff Nurses

Bargaining this week proved frustrating for our team of nurse leaders. Originally we had agreed to meet management face to face for bargaining, hoping this would move the process along and help pick up the pace, but at the last minute management decided they couldn’t meet face to face because it would contradict “the Hospital’s efforts to try to set an example in the community regarding appropriate safety measures.”

While we all want to keep everyone safe, we know that nurses are expected to show up every day to work and wish that the hospital was just as concerned with the safety of nurses, who continue to work short staffed and without adequate safety protocols.

We are not able to hide behind office doors to keep us safe or opt to work over Zoom. We hope management will rethink their position and work with us rather than against us as we work to negotiate a fair contract. Our next sessions are on October 29 and 30.

During our session we discussed seven articles:
- Low census
- Employment status and Definitions
- Mandatory Meetings
- Joint Responsibility
- Non-Discrimination
- Seniority and Grievance
- Arbitration

Our of these seven articles, we were able to come to one tentative agreement (TA) regarding Mandatory Meetings and agreed they would be paid in full, including if this put a nurse into overtime.

We also discussed our COVID-19 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and extending it even further as well as including nurses in decision making processes. One specific issue has been an inconsistency in what we tell our nurses who have been exposed to...
Management Asserts Protecting Traveler’s Time... *(continued from page 1)*

COVID-19 or are showing symptoms and what we tell our patients.

We were informed at negotiations that management will be hiring 10 travelers for med/surg because of such high turnover and a hiring freeze. We continue to impress on management that the reason they have such high turnover is a result of nursing being stressed out, complaining of long hours, overburdened by management, and perhaps most significant is a lack of respect.

That lack of respect can’t be clearer when management informs us that they have agreed to a contract with travelers that ensures they will be paid for all their shifts of work even if they get canceled. Of course, that will require us to be sent home without pay if census drops within the hospital.

We feel that if management has an obligation to pay a traveler for getting canceled, they should certainly agree to pay our staff who have dedicated themselves to this hospital and community as well.

Why would they be willing to prioritize travelers over our dedicated staff? We don’t want to be patronized by management. If they value us, then send the travelers home.

One really positive piece of bargaining this round was that we had some floor nurses who are not on our bargaining team join the conversation as observers.

“I had the opportunity to listen in on the bargaining meeting this week and it was very interesting. The bargaining team is tackling some important issues, especially in regard to safety. I would encourage everyone to communicate with the bargaining team on any issues that arise. They really are putting in their time and effort to make WVMC a better place for nurses to work,” Kristin Hallajan

If you would like to join our next bargaining session as an observer, please email Elizabeth at Gemeroy@OregonRN.org to get the link and instructions.

Completing the Staffing Request & Documentation Form (SRDF)

**WHY FILL OUT THE SRDF?**

The Oregon Hospital Nurse Staffing Law defines “safe patient care” as “…nursing care that is provided appropriately, in a timely manner, and meets the patient’s health care needs.” Inappropriate nurse staffing can lead to patient care not being met.

The information gathered in SRDFs allows ONA to track staffing data and provide information to hospital wide staffing committees. It also provides valuable information to labor representatives about how specific units are staffed, and can be used to assist with OHA complaints.

**HOW TO FILL OUT THE SRDF**

If you work a shift with insufficient nurse staffing, you should complete the following steps:

1. Notify someone in the chain of command;
2. Ask for additional staff;
3. Ask for a response in a reasonable period of time, (e.g., minutes, hours) and;
4. Complete the SRDF as detailed below.

The nurse should complete the SRDF at the end of the shift or within 48 hours. The SRDF can be found online at OregonRN.org/SRDF. A PDF copy is automatically emailed to the nurse and to ONA, and it is the nurse’s responsibility to forward a copy of the completed form to the nurse manager and staffing co-chair. **The SRDF should be completed even if the problem is corrected quickly.**

Questions about the SRDF process? Email SRDF@OregonRN.org
T-Shirt Solidarity Days & Sticker Up

We have loved seeing ONA t-shirts and stickers on bargaining days! This is a great way to show solidarity with our bargaining team. Please continue to wear stickers and t-shirts during our next bargaining sessions on October 29 and 30.

Register to Vote

With health care access and labor protections at stake this election, it’s more important than ever that nurses show up and make the big decisions on Tuesday, Nov. 3 to ensure our voices are heard and our ballots are counted.

If you’ve moved, changed your name, or haven’t voted in Oregon over the past several elections, please check to make sure you are registered to vote here.

Registrations must be updated by Oct. 13. Be sure you are up-to-date on the candidates and issues who will be on your ballot by checking out the full list of ONA’s endorsements.

ANA Launches Resilience & Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource Site

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is committed to meeting the needs of nurses and has launched a NEW Nurse Suicide Prevention and Resilience Resource site to provide information and tools to address the critical issue of suicide prevention.

Research indicates that nurses are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general public. During this unprecedented time, nurses are struggling with mental health issues like fear, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress as they respond to COVID-19 and continue to care for all patients.

Effectively managing these mental health issues is essential in nurse suicide prevention.

ANA’s Resilience and Nurse Suicide Prevention Resource site provides information and tools to:

- Build resilience
- Assist in active crises
- Support suicide survivors
- Offer grief and bereavement coping strategies
- Honor a nurse’s memory

We encourage all nurses to check out the site, bookmark the pages, and share the resources with a colleague or a friend in need.

Nurses, you are not alone. Help is available. Learn more here.
October 2, 2020

Lorinda Bergen, CEO
Willamette Valley Medical Center
2700 SE Straus Ave
McMinnville, OR 97128

Jenie White, Chair
Willamette Valley Medical Center Bargaining Unit Executive Team
Oregon Nurses Association
18765 SW Boones Ferry Rd, Suite 200
Tualatin, OR 97062

Dear Ms. Bergen and Ms. White,

I write to encourage Willamette Valley Medical Center (WVMC) and the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) to negotiate employment contracts between the ONA-represented nurses and WVMC in good faith and as soon as possible. WVMC and ONA share the goals of providing the best possible care for patients and a safe working environment for nurses. I’m hopeful that these shared goals can inspire a timely resolution of contract negotiations.

Since the earliest days of the pandemic, I’ve had the opportunity to connect with Oregonians from around the district I’m honored to represent. I’ve heard from families struggling with the loss of a job, and I’ve talked to people who have lost loved ones. First responders and health care workers are worried about PPE shortages and bringing COVID-19 home to their loved ones. I’ve spoken with hospital executives concerned about access to supplies and testing materials, who are up every night worried about hospital capacity and having the workforce to respond to the many challenges the pandemic has wrought. In every sector, I’ve seen challenge and heartbreak. I’ve also seen innovation, collaboration, and countless examples of people working together, stepping up to help someone in need, or solving a problem together. This is the spirit of the Oregon that I know.

I urge you to bring this Oregon spirit to your negotiations, and recognize that you have more in common than not, and that the success of the hospital is directly related to the success of its workforce. Nurses are on the front lines of the health care system and are essential in every part of the system, including in the care and experience of each patient and their family or loved ones. Nurses come to work at significant personal risk, particularly during a pandemic. They know each patient’s needs inside and out, and have a vital perspective on safe staffing and quality care. They are dedicated to patients, and they value the community at WVMC and in Yamhill County.

I encourage ONA and WVMC to negotiate contracts in good faith as quickly and amiably as possible. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please direct questions or updates to Sarah Baessler in my Oregon office. She may be reached by emailing sarah.baessler@mail.house.gov or by phone at 503-469-6010.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress