Last week the hospital distributed information regarding negotiations that were slanted and confusing. Many of you expressed anger and others asked important questions as we continue to work to address key issues at the bargaining table.

The hospital’s proposal would not provide current nurses with full credit for their seniority. This is important because their proposal would allow them to hire new nurses with equal seniority at higher wages than all of you who have had a longstanding commitment to the hospital. This needs to be fixed.

Our proposal would ensure that nurses are not disadvantaged and provided the proper credit for seniority.

Furthermore, administration’s last proposal to increase wages by 50 cents in the first year of the contract would continue to leave WVMC nurses significantly behind the wages of area nurses.

This would increase the starting rate to $37.50. Compare that to Providence Newberg that has a starting rate of $40.12, Silverton that has a starting rate of $39.28, McKenzie Willamette at $40.55 and Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center at $40.66.

All these institutions have wage scales that provide for general wage increases and step increases recognizing years of experience. The hospital proposal is not unique and consistent with what we see in all ONA contracts.

In fact, it wasn't until June of this year when we presented our proposal on wage clarification, did management begin to accept this important principle. The hospitals referenced in this article also have contract provisions that provide for increases for certification and BSN differentials that are delineated in their collective bargaining agreements.

The hospital can "spin" their proposal as generous and based on mutual respect, but the numbers don't lie.

Review the wage scales of the locally competitive hospitals, and see for yourself the respective contracts. Or go to www.OregonRN.org/wvmc to view the various wage scales and proposals.

Read for yourself the distortions in Ms. Bergen's July 30 letter to WVMC nurses. We are glad to hear that the CEO wants to complete negotiations expeditiously, but rest assured that will not mean an inferior contract for nurses.

However, negotiations will NOT reach a successful conclusion if all we are going to hear from the hospital is rhetoric.

We stand eager to see their proposal on wages at our bargaining sessions next week and will certainly share them with you. Thank you again for all your support.
Unfair Labor Practice Win

This past week the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), found that WVMC executives engaged in unfair labor practices against nurses, citing the hospital for failing to bargain in good faith by refusing release vital information needed for contract bargaining.

In March 2020, ONA requested copies of any unsafe staffing/safety reports filed by nurses over the course of the previous three years along with written procedures for reporting safety concerns.

The information was relevant to specific issues nurses were discussing at the bargaining table including workplace assaults and injuries; staffing changes that impacted the nurse's ability to provide safe competent care; and excessive overtime requirements.

WVMC executives failed to respond to multiple follow up requests. Finally, in August 2020, hospital executives stated they would not share the requested information, after which ONA filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) with the NLRB.

Now the hospital will face extensive scrutiny by the NLRB and should recognize that nurses will not stay silent when advocating for the absolute best care for their patients. Our resolve to negotiate and win a fair contract for nurses and their patients is as strong as ever. The judge ordered WVMC to immediately bargain in good faith and to provide the requested information within 14 days.

To review the findings of the NLRB, follow the link to review the decision of the administrative law judge. Or go to www.nlrb.gov/case/19-CA-265597 for details on our win.

Engaging the Community

WVMC nurses attended the McMinnville farmers market to spread the word about management's lack of expediency concerning negotiations

Nurses, along with ONA labor representative Tizoc Arenas, took the opportunity last Thursday, July 29, at the McMinnville Farmers Market to distribute leaflets and make the public aware of nurses’ concerns over the need to seriously improve working conditions at WVMC.

We were met with community members who were not only willing to listen to our message but were also very supportive of our contract fight and the issues that nurses are dealing with at the hospital including high turnover and unsafe staffing overall.

For nurses, working at WVMC is more than just a job. It comes with a sacred duty to our patients to provide the best care possible.

Clearly, the community is behind WVMC nurses and many asked what they could do to help. We have a meeting arranged with community members next week to brainstorm ways to engage our allies in our campaign with the hospital.

If you or your neighbors would like to get involved have them reach out to one of the bargaining team members and we will loop them in. We will keep you posted on future actions.

Thanks to all the nurses who participated in our successful outreach last Thursday and we urge you to join us at our future events. Talk to your contract action team (CAT) representatives for further information.