



Association of University Registered Nurses

An Oregon Nurses Association Bargaining Unit at
Oregon Health Sciences University

Bargaining Update

June 30, 2010: Number 5

Economic Concerns from ONA and OHSU

Our fifth session was held on June 30. We presented ten additional concerns for problem solving, as did OHSU. (See the back of this update for OHSU's concerns.)

HERE ARE THE NEW CONCERNS THAT WE PRESENTED FOR ONA/AURN.

Health Insurance. The cost to RNs - the combination of the out of pocket maximums; deductibles; and the employee portion of the premium for kids, spouses/partners, and families; is more expensive than what RNs are required to pay at other hospitals and more expensive than what other employees at OHSU are required to pay.

Health Insurance. RNs are having problems with access (availability of appointments) when they attempt to use their health care benefits, and they are having problems with the billing process (customer service, timeliness of the billing) after they have accessed their benefits.

Wages. We need to keep the compensation structure for RNs at OHSU competitive with the wage and compensation structure of other RNs at other large NW Hospitals.

Night Shift Nurses and Vacation Pay. Night shift and evening shift nurses incur a cut in their pay when they use vacation time.

Education. We need to increase OHSU's commitment to nurse professionalism and achieving the Magnet designation through the provision of and support for additional education and training.

Parking. The cost to RNs to park at OHSU is financially burdensome, and that financial burden is not equivalent to what other RNs incur for parking at other large hospitals in the NW.

Staffing. Staff RNs need more influence over their unit's budget and staffing plan as they are developed in the UBNPCs.

Float Pool RNs and Compensation. The compensation for floating needs to be clear and easy to administer for Staff RNs, Resource RNs and Specialty Float Pool RNs.

Call Requirements. Having a mandatory call obligation makes a nursing position at OHSU unattractive to work. How can we make having to take call less burdensome or more attractive?

Biking. Making commuting to work by bicycle a more attractive option for more nurses at OHSU.

With this style of bargaining, opening statements are left a little vague to allow for a variety of options to be brainstormed. As you read our statements you can imagine many ways to satisfy or deal with the concern. As specific topics get addressed watch for the ideas or the options that emerge to gain a sense of our direction and the direction that OHSU might want to go.

A complete set of ONA's opening issues and concerns is on both of our web pages.

AURN/ONA Officers

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Katy Cooper, CMICU 12K

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Bargaining Team Members

Maggie Rising, 5A

Cheryl Rice, DCH OR

Phyllis Lee, South OR

Stew Levy, Pain Clinic, CHH

ONA Work Group Participants

Unscheduled Absences

Julie Jorgensen, Peds ER

Julie Castro, Cardiac Surgical ICU

Nancy Lee, Short Stay

Katy Cooper, CMICU 12K

Vacation Scheduling

Helga Promitzer, Care Management

Terry Stephens, Lactation

Frank Hunt, 5A

Susanna Rhodes, DNCC

Shared Governance

Gitta Gaida, 7C Medicine

Intermediate Care Unit

Clarice Gerlach, Cardiac Medical ICU

Dawn Fisher, Nursing Resource

Louise Darling, RN Float Pool

Recruitment and Retention

Marietta Sisca, HC Operating Room

Carma Stone, Digestive Health Center

Robin Vesey, Oncology Treatment

Phyllis Lee, South OR

What are OHSU's concerns regarding economics issues

HERE IS WHAT OHSU PRESENTED ON JUNE 30, AT OUR NEGOTIATIONS SESSION

Accrued Leave

The existing components for accrued leave (vacation, holiday, and sick leave), with the additional option for nurses of compensatory time, present substantial administrative challenges and complications for OHSU. They also limit the more extensive pre-scheduling opportunities that are available to employees under a comprehensive paid time off system.

Overtime and Premium Pay

The currently prescribed method for calculating overtime, which counts hours worked at a premium or overtime rate toward weekly overtime, allows employees to receive weekly overtime pay without having worked 40 hours at the regular pay rate. This method creates a penalty to the Employer for overtime compensation that is above industry standards and creates a competitive disadvantage.

The current provisions for double back pay do not permit the Employer the opportunity, when workload allows, to preserve eight (8) hours' rest for RNs. This also provides for a double-dipping system for premium pay for nurses called into work from on-call status.

The length of time the Employer is obligated to compensate a nurse at the premium rate of pay when the nurse reports for work while on call needs to be clarified.

Other Compensation

OHSU would like to discuss potential avenues to explore for merit and/or performance-based pay programs including parameters and time lines for the development of such programs.

The absence of a minimum hourly requirement for resource nurses for advancement to the next pay step is inequitable and creates premature cost increases for OHSU before the nurse has gained the additional experience expected for advancement to the next step.

Retirement

The retirement provisions of the contract need to be updated with built-in flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances affecting the PERS and OPSRP retirement plans.

The length of the eligibility period for the pre-retirement counseling and the amount of paid time allowed for pre-retirement counseling leave are excessive.

Insurance Benefits

Monthly tracking of employee insurance benefits is difficult to administer, causes timekeeper issues and leads

to reprocessing of transitions.

The monthly cash benefit associated with opt-out coverage is excessive.

We did not spend time at this session talking about OHSU's intent or concerns with regard to some of these statements. While some of them clearly give your Bargaining Team pause, remember that with this style of bargaining, we have to reach consensus jointly on any solution before it can be enacted or before we change the contract. This is their starting point, and not necessarily their end point. Stay tuned and watch how the conversation unfolds by reading these updates.

If you want to see a complete list of the concerns that OHSU has, view them on our websites.

What should happen to nurses on units who experience prolonged low census that are not likely to lead to layoffs?

The bulk of our bargaining session was spent on finishing up our discussions on this concern.

Over the last few years some units have experienced prolonged low census that lead to the unit being closed temporarily. This happened because the patent census did not justify having any staff around. Some of these units were closed for more than three days with some units staying closed for over two weeks.

The contract does not give much guidance about this situation. Together the parties developed concepts that will lead to contract language that defines the rights of RNs and what the employer will do in these situations.

We agreed that when prolonged closures of units are to occur (greater than five days) and are known, notice will be given to RNs on the unit. Options for working elsewhere in similar units or to gain experience in another unit through cross training, as well as the option to take time away from work will be provided. Regular RNs who were not getting hours and wanted and could do the work would be given priority for work over Resource RN. Despite a lack of work, if time is spent not working, benefits would be maintained.

We think we achieved a good outcome on this issue. Look for a complete write up of this proposal to be posted on our websites after the July 14, session.

Our next bargaining session is on July 14. If you are interested in coming, please let us know. The session will take place at ONA Headquarters in Tualatin.