



Oregon Nurses Association  
Bargaining Unit Newsletter

April 23, 2015

# St. Charles Medical Center - Bend Bargaining Update 4

In this issue

Negotiation Overview - Pages 1-2  
Concerns About Attestation - Page 2

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## Fourth Negotiation Session Completed April 21

Our fourth negotiation session began Tuesday, April 21, with a presentation from Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Welander regarding the current state of St. Charles' (SCHS) finances. The teams spent the majority of the day discussing the Article 7 package proposal that SCHS administration presented last week.

The financial presentation confirmed that SCHS had a solid financial year in 2014, with 2 percent growth and a healthy operating margin. In the first quarter of 2015, the systems operating margin is at a robust 5.5 percent and they are predicting a 2.7 percent operating margin for this year. Overall, the system is doing well, financially. We learned that benefit costs have been running higher than predicted this year and the system is currently seeking a new vendor for the wellness benefit program which they hope to have in place this summer.

The teams also engaged in a productive discussion around the Article 7 package proposal presented by SCHS last week. The SCHS team revealed that they didn't feel the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) team had given enough rationale for our proposal around meals and breaks and our team was able to explain our proposal in detail. We explained that our proposal to have Unit Practice Committees

(UPCs) develop a methodology for providing meals and breaks is a way to ensure that unit nurses are a part of the process. If unit nurses are engaged in developing the methodology for how meals and breaks will be taken, the process will be tailored for the flow of each individual unit and nurses will be more likely to feel comfortable taking their breaks.

We had a valuable discussion about the new attestation forms and shared with administration that many nurses feel that they will get in trouble if they answer honestly that their meal and/or break was missed.

SCHS administration clearly stated that the attestation forms are intended to be for data collection so that they can truly understand the scope of the problem of missed meals and breaks. Supervisors and managers who follow up with nurses who have missed meals and/or breaks should be doing so to receive information about causes, to ensure nurses receive meals and breaks in the future – not as a punitive measure. (See the attestation article on page two.)

SCHS also expressed concerns with our proposal to allow a self-scheduling process for those units that would like to implement such a process. Your ONA team was able to clarify that the unit

*Continued on page 2*

## Negotiation Overview *Continued from page 1*

manager would still need to review and approve the final schedule to ensure that no favoritism takes place and that financial concerns have been considered. SCHS expressed that several units would not be able to self-schedule due to a large number of nurses and/or skill mix needs (the operating room [OR] for example). The ONA team was receptive to their concerns but expressed that staff nurses on those units would understand the challenges and would most likely not vote for a self-scheduling process.

Our ONA team questioned SCHS about their perceived need for increased variable shift positions. **SCHS clarified that they have no intention of posting a lot of variable shifts** but want to have the flexibility to do so on units where there are consistently **a few day shifts and a few evening or night shifts** not covered. In these cases, they would like the ability to post a variable shift position if there is an RN willing to fill it rather than filling these holes with a relief nurse or an RN working an extra shift.

We raised concerns with increasing the requirements for relief nurses and asked some questions about whether relief nurses are currently held accountable to the requirements. It seems that there is inconsistent

tracking of relief nurses because some units are scheduling their relief nurses through the staffing office and others are not. Our ONA team shared feedback we have received from many relief nurses who are unhappy with the proposals to increase their requirements. The SCHS team seemed to understand our concern that increasing the requirements may have the unintended consequence of reducing our relief nurse pool which would provide even less flexibility in staffing.

Our ONA team felt that SCHS administration heard our concerns regarding the Article 7 package proposal. SCHS demonstrated this by agreeing to revisit the proposal and present another for the ONA team to consider.

Next weeks' session will begin with a presentation regarding SCHS benefits and then focus on economic proposals. Both teams have agreed to present all outstanding economic proposals by the end of our session April 28. Look for next week's update for detailed information regarding the economic issues that will be decided during these negotiations.

If you have any questions, comments or considerations for our ONA bargaining team don't hesitate to contact any of the staff nurse representatives or ONA Labor Representative Courtney Niebel at [Niebel@OregonRN.org](mailto:Niebel@OregonRN.org).

## Concerns about Attestation

Since SCHS has implemented the meals and breaks attestation form we have received concerns from many nurses who fear their answers may bring about discipline. Clinical supervisors and managers have been following up with nurses whose attestation forms reveal that they have missed meals and breaks. We have heard from nurses who feel that this is punitive. SCHS administration insists that supervisors and managers are not following up to punish nurses who have missed their meals and breaks but to discover the root cause of the problem.

### What you need to know about attestation and missed meals and breaks:

The attestation form is a legal document and you must be honest. Attesting that you received your meal and breaks when you did not is technically illegal. If we do not provide an honest account of missed meals and

breaks administration will never know the scope of the problem or understand the need for a solution.

If your supervisor or manager asks why you missed a meal or break, be honest about the situation that kept you from being able to take your meal or break. **See below if you feel that your manager/supervisor is being punitive.**

You have the right to union representation any time that your supervisor or manager is asking you questions about missed meals and breaks **if you have a reasonable belief that your answers could lead to discipline.** If you feel that you may be disciplined for how you answered on the attestation form you must tell your supervisor that you would like union representation and you would be happy to answer their questions once union representation is present.