ONA/OFNHP Union Partnership Agreement at Kaiser Interstate

FAQ

What is the goal of the Partnership Agreement between ONA and OFNHP?

The goal of the Partnership Agreement is to strengthen the ties between ONA and OFNHP at Kaiser Interstate. The hope would be for the nurses currently represented by ONA to be represented jointly by ONA and OFNHP after the Bargaining Unit approves such an arrangement.

Practically speaking, the most significant impact of joint representation would mean that OFNHP would immediately assume the responsibility of overseeing the day-to-day maintenance of the Kaiser Bargaining Unit and negotiate the local agreement that is set to expire September 30, 2012. ONA will still have a role in the Coalition and participate in Regional and National negotiations for the time being.

Who are the partners?

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is the State's largest professional association and labor union for registered nurses, representing 13,000 registered nurses in facilities throughout Oregon. However, ONA does not have major representational density in the Kaiser System where it only represents seventy nurses. Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP), however, does have major representational density within Kaiser.

Why did they partner?

ONA and OFNHP proposed this partnership to enhance the effectiveness and reach of nurse advocacy through the power of cooperation and joint action.

This relationship also provides ONA represented nurses at Kaiser Interstate Bargaining Unit nurses enhanced representation in coordination and collaboration with their OFNHP colleagues.

How will this happen?

OFNHP and ONA will circulate a petition amongst nurses represented by ONA at Kaiser Interstate. By signing the petition, you will be signaling your support for ONA and OFNHP to approach Kaiser and request voluntary recognition of the two unions as the joint representative. Should Kaiser voluntarily recognize ONA and OFNHP as the joint representative, then the National Labor Relations Board will post notices announcing Kaiser's voluntary recognition and the process for requesting a formal election, should the nurses want that.

Should Kaiser not voluntarily recognize ONA and OFNHP as the joint representative, then ONA and OFNHP will seek a formal election from the NLRB during the “open” period in the Contract which is between June 2, 2012 and July 2, 2012.
**What happens if we are jointly represented?**

Upon joint certification, members who are jointly represented by ONA and OFNHP shall enjoy the full rights, benefits, and privileges of membership in both ONA and OFNHP! This includes membership in the local, state, and national organizations (listed below) on the same basis as all other ONA and OFNHP members.

It is important to note that once we have joint certification incumbent officers, stewards and officials will remain unaffected except that the local will take good faith steps to bring its governance into compliance with the Constitutions, Bylaws and Procedures of ONA and OFNHP.

**What will my membership rights include?**

Through this Partnership Agreement, the parties will make available the services and benefits of full membership in both organizations to their current members at Kaiser Interstate.

Members will be affiliated with: Oregon Nurses Association, American Nurses Association, Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Oregon AFL-CIO, NW Oregon Central Labor Council. This may later include the National Federation of Nurses (NFN; ONA’s national nursing union) following additional discussions.

Specifically, your benefits and privileges will include, but are not limited to:

- The right to vote, hold office, and participate in state and national governance bodies and conventions on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- The right to participate fully in governance at every organizational level on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Access to local, state and national organizational publications on the basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Eligibility for professional liability coverage on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Participation in optional membership insurance, benefit, credit card, mortgage, discount, travel and legal referral programs on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Participation in professional development and continuing education programs on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Coverage under legal defense and militancy funds and programs on the same basis as all other members of either and both organizations
- Bonding of officers
- Jurisdictional protection under AFL-CIO Article XX and XXI rules and procedures

**Who will act as my legal representative for collective bargaining?**

Upon joint certification, OFNHP will assume the status of lead partner with primary responsibility for collective bargaining and contract administration at Kaiser Interstate and, as lead Partner, would be responsible for the activities which would normally fall to the exclusive representative.
ONA will still maintain a presence within the Coalition both at the Regional and National level. For example, Alan Yoder, ONA’s Legal Counsel, will continue in his capacity as the co-lead on the Regional Labor and Management Partnership Committee.

**How did this come about?**

In February, Bargaining Unit nurse leaders at Providence Milwaukie initiated discussions with both OFNHP and ONA regarding how to enhance service and representation at Providence Milwaukie, a unit of nurses represented by OFNHP.

Discussions between OFNHP, AFT, and ONA soon included a conversation about Kaiser Interstate given ONA’s lack of density in the Kaiser System compared to OFNHP. Also, on an ongoing basis, ONA’s nurses at Kaiser have requested discussions with their OFNHP nurse colleagues to discuss common interests, like seniority, representation on nurse committees, and the career ladder.

The result is a creative and unique dual membership approach for Kaiser Interstate and Providence Milwaukie nurses that would allow these two groups the benefits and expertise of both unions.

**How will my dues be affected?**

For ease of transition from the effective date of this Agreement through the next full fiscal year for ONA and OFNHP (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012), members of the Kaiser Interstate unit shall pay dues amounts (and agency fees as applicable) calculated on the same formula currently in effect pursuant to the Constitution and By-laws of ONA for the Kaiser Interstate unit.

Following this initial period, adjustments to dues rates may be necessary and the unions agree to meet annually to recalculate dues rates for both units based on changes in organizational constitutions and by-laws or other factors. OFNHP’s dues are currently 1.4 percent of straight-time pay up to a maximum of $70.32 per month.

**Why a joint membership rather than being represented only by OFNHP?**

As you know, the labor community is under threat across the country. In these times of threat, it is important for all labor unions to work together to help strengthen the movement and show our solidarity in the face of attacks on our rights. This partnership is an example of how labor unions can, and should, work together to support collective bargaining rights.

In addition, the nurses of Oregon will all benefit from having one powerful voice at the Oregon State Legislature as we advocate for policies that impact nurses, nursing practice and health care reform. This partnership enables ONA and OFNHP to join forces to address the most compelling issues facing nurses in our State.

The partnership strengthens both ONA and OFNHP by providing opportunities for greater collaboration, co-operation and protection through no raid agreements.
Finally, both ONA and OFNHP see no downsides to having a strong “silent partner” relationship! We are stronger together and will have access to greater resources and collaboration than either union would have alone.

*Will other units or facilities be affected?*

As part of this Agreement, dual organizational and representational memberships and activities will be offered to the OFNHP nurses at Providence Milwaukie.

*Is this a permanent dual membership arrangement?*

It is the intent of the parties that the Partnership Agreement be permanent, however, there are provisions allowing for future review of the continuation and amendment of the partnership and dual membership arrangement.