



# Caring for Oregon

Press Conference

3 p.m., June 7, 2024

Prepared Remarks on ONA Represented Nurses Giving 10-Day Notice of Strikes at Providence St. Vincent, Providence Newberg, Providence Willamette Falls, Providence Medford, Providence Hood River and Providence Milwaukie

Speakers:

- Anne Tan Piazza, Executive Director of Oregon Nurses Association
- Virginia Smith, RN, Member of ONA Board of Directors and Chair of ONA Providence Willamette Falls Bargaining Unit
- Jessica Carrier Lobell, RN, Member of ONA Board of Directors and ONA Providence St. Vincent Bargaining Team
- Caroline Allison, RN, ONA Providence Medford Bargaining Team
- Denise Arnold, RN, ONA Providence Newberg Bargaining Team

<p>3:00 p.m.: Press Conference Begins</p>	<p><b>Anne Tan Piazza, ONA Exec Dir:</b></p> <p>Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us for this important announcement regarding the ongoing contract negotiations between Oregon Nurses Association-represented nurses and administration at Providence St. Vincent, Providence Newberg, Providence Willamette Falls, Providence Medford, Providence Hood River and Providence Milwaukie.</p> <p>My name is Anne Tan Piazza and I have the great honor of serving the 20-thousand nurses and health care professionals as the Executive Director of the Oregon Nurses Association. Today I will introduce our speakers who will give remarks and, once they have finished, help answer questions from the press.</p>
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	<p>A strike is a very, very serious action and it is one that ONA and our nurses at Providence would never take lightly.</p> <p>After talking with the dedicated health care professionals at the six Providence bargaining units I can tell you that none of them wants to go on strike. They are called to help and want to care for people at the bedside.</p> <p>After 9 months, more than 60 bargaining sessions across six hospitals, and hundreds of hours of bargaining, it's clear that Providence is not willing to make the necessary investments in patient care for our communities and quality healthcare for their workforce. Additionally, earlier this week we had to send a letter to the Oregon Health Authority because Providence, along with other hospitals, are blatantly trying to undermine Oregon's safe staffing law and worsen patient care. This is unacceptable.</p> <p>But we are still here and ready to bargaining. Our hope is and has always been to settle a fair contract that prioritizes patients and nurses.</p> <p>I first want to introduce Virginia Smith, RN, a member of ONA's Board of Directors and Chair of the Providence Willamette Falls Bargaining Unit Executive Committee. Virginia?</p>
<p>3:05 p.m. Virginia Smith</p>	<p><b>Virginia Smith, RN:</b></p> <p>Thank you, Anne. Good afternoon, My name is Virginia Smith, I am a med/surg nurse at Providence Willamette Falls, a member of ONA's Board of Directors and the Chair of the Oregon Nurses</p>

Association Providence Willamette Falls Executive Committee and Bargaining Team.

We are here today because Providence continues to act in the interest of their own bottom line and not in the interest of patients, our communities, or the people that make health care work: the workers.

Providence is an incredibly wealthy corporation that continues to act irresponsibly by shortchanging nurses, patients, and our communities.

Just a short time ago, a 10-day notice of the intent to hold a limited duration three-day strike was hand-delivered and emailed to representatives of Providence St. Vincent, Providence Newberg, Providence Willamette Falls, Providence Hood River, Providence Medford and Providence Milwaukie management. We have fulfilled our legal requirements to notify the facilities that nurses at those six facilities will be on strike beginning at 6 a.m. on Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

What, exactly does that mean for our communities? The 10-day notice gives enough time for our hospitals to transfer patients and make decisions about what services they will continue to provide. It is important for you to know that Providence has a duty to provide adequate care to all of its communities, and because it needs to meet that need, Providence should seek to settle our contracts as soon as possible.

It is important for everyone to know that we are engaged in every effort to reach a fair agreement, and that included having federal mediators attend negotiations with all six units from Tuesday, June 4 through today. Nurses have bargained in good faith,

and we need Providence to do the same in hopes of getting a fair contract in place prior to June 18 at 6 am.

We have been clear from the beginning about what our priorities are, Providence cannot undermine our Safe Staffing Law; nurses need affordable and quality healthcare, and we need market-competitive wages so we can retain the many talented nurses we have and recruit more to fill the many open shifts we have to cover every day.

For the past 9 months of negotiations, Providence management has refused to listen to these priorities. It also seems that Providence has been engaged in what appears to be a coordinated effort to undermine Oregon's Safe Staffing law.

It remains our hope that Providence will agree to the fair contract we deserve. Going on strike is a last resort, but we will not accept a bad deal that simply allows Providence to continue the dangerous and unsustainable status quo. And that is why we have announced this 10-day notice, and why we are preparing to go on strike beginning June 18 at 6 a.m.

3:10 p.m.  
Jessica Lobell

**Jessica Lobell, RN, Providence St. Vincent:**

Hello. I am Jessica Lobell, a Labor & Delivery nurse at Providence St. Vincent, a member of the ONA Board of Directors, and the vice chair of the St. Vincent Executive committee.

I cannot and will not stand by while Providence continues to shortchange patients and nurses in service of their own profit margin. That's why I'm standing here with my colleagues from across the Providence Health System ready to strike.

In addition to what my union siblings have mentioned I want to be very clear about one of our key priorities: affordable, quality healthcare.

This may be a surprise to many of you listening today, but Providence nurses often have worse health insurance than our patients. Let me repeat that very clearly: the healthcare package that Providence continues to offer us and advertise as best-in-class is worse than most people we care for every day.

Providence has been degrading the health benefit package offered to employees over the last decade. This is a big part of the reason why it is so hard to recruit and retain nurses. Our out-of-pocket annual expenses are over \$5,000 more than a Kaiser nurse on a family plan.

So let me paint a picture for you: we all have many colleagues who have left Providence because of the cost of childbirth at a Providence facility with the healthcare plan they offer us.

	<p>For context: Kaiser workers pay \$10 to give birth at a Kaiser facility. The cost for childbirth for one of us is thousands of dollars.</p> <p>This is morally reprehensible and could lead to major staffing issues at Providence facilities and devastating consequences for patients and communities.</p> <p>What we're fighting for is simple: we are fighting for our patients, and we are fighting for respect. We need Providence to make the necessary investments, so nurses can care for our patients without burning out.</p> <p>We are eager to return to the bargaining table to reach an agreement on these priorities and avert a strike, but we are also resolved to strike if necessary to protect the care we provide for our community.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>3:15 p.m. Caroline Allison</p>	<p><b>Caroline Allison, RN, Providence Medford:</b></p> <p>Hi, my name is Caroline Allison and I am an RN in med surg at Providence Medford. I have been a nurse at Providence Medford for four years and I never thought that I would be this disrespected by Providence management.</p> <p>Providence nurses in Medford, like Providence nurses from across the state, are fed up. Providence is a \$28 billion corporation. They pay their CEO more than \$10 million dollars a year, and they can't find the money to invest in nurses and patients? Give me a break.</p> <p>At Providence Medford, we are facing a staffing crisis, and our nurses are overworked, offered low quality healthcare, and paid less than the current market for nurses in Medford. Adding insult to injury, it has now</p>

	<p>become clear that Providence appears to be systematically trying to undermine Oregon’s Safe Staffing Law.</p> <p>The Safe Staffing Law was intended to solve the nurse workforce shortage crisis and allow us to greatly enhance patient care. Instead, Providence has again made the decision to focus on their own bottom lines instead of their workforce, their communities, and their patients.</p> <p>This is why I voted to strike. Because if a \$28 billion dollar healthcare corporation isn’t going to fight for the community, our patients, and our nurses, then we will.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>3:20 p.m. Denise Arnold</p>	<p><b>Denise Arnold, RN, Providence Newberg:</b></p> <p>A few weeks ago we learned that Providence President and CEO Dr. Rod Hochman will be retiring at the end of the year. In an interview, Hochman said his leadership was guided by his experience as a physician because he’s seen what it’s like and what’s needed and what isn’t. He added that “we just have to listen a little bit more to the people that actually do the work.”</p> <p>Well, if Dr. Hochman has listened to the nurses, it’s not apparent.</p> <p>Nothing has changed. We still have heavy workloads; we still don’t get enough time with patients or our families; and we are dealing with deteriorating working conditions.</p> <p>Since June 1st nurses have had to fight for our patients to ensure they receive the care they are paying for. The</p>

	<p>corporation has blown up years of shared governance, and has made clear they no longer value or want to our expertise on bedside nursing. In Newberg while advocating to simply keep the same staffing plan for our units that has been in place for years we were met with accusations of being selfish, and management belittled us for “not being a team player”.</p> <p>To be clear, all we asked for was to continue to staff our units the same, allowing us to continue to provide safe, excellent patient care. No matter the costs nurses will continue to fight for patient safety.</p> <p>(add your story)</p>
<p>3:25 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Anne Tan Piazza, ONA Executive Director</b></p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>For community members who want to help, visit Respect Our Nurses dot com – again that’s Respect Our Nurses dot com. Show our nurses, in any way you can, just how much we respect their dedication to serving our community to the fullest. Together, we can encourage Providence to come to the table with a fair contract.</p> <p>We will now open the floor.</p>
	<p><b>Anne Tan Piazza</b></p> <p><b><i>Q&amp;A ENDS</i></b></p> <p>Thank you all for your time. We will end the press conference now. Our communications staff will be sending out a press release shortly, including a copy of today’s prepared remarks. If members of the press who are in attendance in person wish to speak with a nurse</p>



or clinician, please speak with Myrna Jensen, who will assist in setting you up for an interview.

You can also learn more about how to support the nurses and clinicians of Providence at [Respect Our Nurses dot com](http://RespectOurNurses.com).