

Union deal means fewer patients per nurse at Kaiser Sunnyside

Nurses at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center are about to get something coveted by some of their peers: Staffing ratios that limit the number of patients they can be responsible for at one time.

The ratios were worked out in negotiations last year between Kaiser Permanente managers and the union representing RNs at Sunnyside—Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5017. The local

is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

It started because about 160 of the roughly 350 in-patient registered nurses at Sunnyside were on 10-hour shifts, exchanging patient information during a two-hour overlap. Management wanted them to move to eight- and 12-hour shifts, which are the norm for RNs throughout the Kaiser system. Union members met with management to bargain over that, and last October, agreed to it—in exchange for staffing ratios for all 350 in-patient RNs.

The agreement creates a matrix of staffing ratios that vary depending on the kind of unit and how much care individual patients need. For example, the oncology unit will have no more than four patients per registered nurse. The new rules go into effect May 10, and will lead to more nurses being hired.

“[Staffing ratios] are groundbreaking for nursing as a profession,” says Abigail Hall, an RN in Sunnyside’s progressive care unit. “It means better care for patients. That’s why we’re doing this.”

Nurse staffing ratios are mandated by state law in California, but not in Oregon.

Local 5017’s contract with Kaiser is a local add-on to a nation-wide multi-union collective bargaining agreement that expires in September.

Trumka to attend organizing summit in Vancouver May 19

National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka will join some of the most talented union organizers across the country in Vancouver, Wash., Tuesday, May 19, for the 2015 Organizing Summit.

The summit, presented by the Oregon AFL-CIO, also will feature national AFL-CIO Organizing Director Elizabeth Bunn.

Participants will learn about the state labor federation’s collaborative approach to building worker power.

The summit will be held at the Vancouver Hilton from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is \$25. For more information, go to oraficio.org/organizing-summit/.

Wayne Morris Award goes to IBEW #48’s Joe Esmonde

The Wayne Morse Award for Integrity and Passion was presented to Joe Esmonde, political director for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48. The presentation was made at the Wayne Morse Gala dinner April 17 hosted by the Democratic Party of Oregon.

Esmonde has worked for the union for the past 25 years. A child of parents who went through the Great Depression, Esmonde credited President Roosevelt for providing opportunities and security for working people during difficult times. “Without FDR, it would have been different. The Democrats fixed it,” he said.

Esmonde thanked his union for providing the same opportunities to him and his family today, which allowed him to own a home, send his sons to college, and enjoy a middle-class way of life.

Also attending the Wayne Morse Gala were Gov. Kate Brown, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, and Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. The keynote speaker was U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.



Labor Council to host recognition dinner June 6

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council’s annual Labor Appreciation and Recognition Night banquet will be held Saturday, June 6, at Milwaukie Elks Lodge, 13121

SE McLoughlin Blvd. Dinner tickets are \$20 per person. Raffle tickets also will be sold.

The event is two-fold: It’s a special evening honoring men and women identified by their peers for outstanding contributions to labor and their community, and it’s

a fundraiser for Labor’s Community Service Agency.

The labor council is currently accepting cash and prize donations for the raffle, and nominations for persons to be recognized.

For more information or to order tickets, call 503-235-9444.

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