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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Overworked, underpaid nurses conduct May Day picket outside PeaceHealth Peace Harbor hospital in Florence

PeaceHealth made movement toward an agreement with Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) May 8 — a week after more than 100 nurses and supporters picketed the health network's hospital in Florence, Oregon.

ONA represents 75 nurses at PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center, a 21-bed acute care hospital. They've been bargaining since November 2016 and have been working without a union contract since Jan. 31, 2017. ONA spokesperson Kevin Mealy says members want an end to excessive on-call assignments that result in overwork and unpredictable schedules. They also want wages to catch up with nurses at other PeaceHealth hospitals. The starting wage for registered nurses at Peace Harbor is currently \$33 per hour.

"It's difficult to get nurses to come to Florence and make it their home," Mealy said, because of the lower wages and a scarcity of affordable housing. As a result, a number of nurses commute 80 minutes from Eugene, 60 miles east.

At the May 8 bargaining ses-



Nurses and supporters rally May 1 at the intersection of US 101 and Oregon 126 in Florence. (Photo courtesy of Oregon Nurses Association)

sion — a 12-hour session facilitated by a federal mediator — PeaceHealth presented proposals that address on-call require-

ments and wage disparities.

PeaceHealth, headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, is a nonprofit Catholic health care

system with 10 hospitals in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.

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