



FRIDAY MORNING HUDDLE

A gathering of Oregon nursing workforce leaders together to offer timely updates and share insights from peers and stakeholders during the COVID-19 crisis.

DATE: March 27, 2020

Oregon Health Authority:

Governor's Task Force Report. On March 23rd, the Governor's Joint Task Force for Health Care System Response to COVID-19 released an [initial report](#). Main objectives are distribution of PPE, optimization of hospital capacity, and mobilization of the health care workforce.

Emergency Command Structure. Oregon activated its Emergency Command Structure. Within the healthcare division there are multiple branches, including one focused on workforce, which is led by Eric Gebbie. Other initiatives are ensuring a paid labor pool for stand-up facilities to respond to surge needs and expanding training for the healthcare workforce.

Regional Teams. All are encouraged to connect with their [Regional Health Security Preparedness and Response team](#) for information about local efforts and needs.

Preparing the Workforce:

Legacy Health System is working to transition existing workforce (nurse and non-nurse) into emerging roles and trying to activate the student workforce in ways that will allow them to be salaried and earn school credit. Current focus is identifying staff who have ICU-experience or staff with experience closest to the work being performed in the ICU and transitioning those staff to augment ICU staff. Still assessing what training will look like and encompass. Legacy is utilizing its existing residency/training frameworks to help transition staff. Using central staffing model for nursing and expanding that to non-nursing roles.

Asante Health System also has a residency program for new employees. The need for critical care nurses will be a consideration point. Reallocating staff from surgical departments and clinics and have created online orientation/onboarding process. Asante's staffing council is working on redistributing staff across multiple disciplines and looking at what knowledge and skills are needed to transition staff into new units. Unit leaders are assessing where staff might be reassigned, and which units may need additional support. Staff transitioning into units are assigned to core staff for oversight and assistance.

Lower Umpqua Hospital and **Bay Area Hospital** are orienting OR nurses to assist in acute care units.

Oregon Nurses Association main priority is PPE for healthcare workers and revisiting collective bargaining agreements with facilities.

Oregon State Board of Nursing Fourth-year nursing students may receive clinical practicum credit for their work as technicians to augment current nursing staffing. That is an arrangement that must be reached between the school and the facility. Schools have received the green light to continue clinical practicums online. NCSBN has 100 testing stations for the NCLEX open. The board has not heard that graduates are being delayed. Portland and Medford have sites open for testing. Board is still assessing the need for a GN Permit. Right now, the board is not seeing a backlog of students waiting for testing. If backlog becomes a problem, schools need to inform the Board so they can implement the GN Permit. Oregon State Board of Nursing will be providing additional information on how nurses work with unlicensed/unregulated personnel in an upcoming webinar. Unlicensed personnel cannot replace nurses, but can be used to augment the nursing workforce.

NWONL is hearing nursing home facilities concerned about burnout and stress for existing staff and recruiting additional staff. About 40% of nursing homes have seen positive COVID cases in Washington. Washington is allowing nursing students and nursing assistant students are considered essential and can continue clinicals if allowed by site.

Resources:

Assessing and Preparing Your Workforce for Surge Capacity Nursing Webinar. Operating across several western states, Providence was among the first health systems in the United States to respond to COVID-19 in their communities. Hear Troy Larkin, PhD, RN, Executive Director of Nursing Outcomes and Education at Providence Nursing Institute talk about developing a framework and identifying resources to assess your existing workforce and transition them to provide a surge response. [Click here](#) to register.

Assigning Tasks to Unregulated Workers: What is the difference between assignment and delegation? What tasks can be assigned to unregulated workers? Who is responsible for ensuring worker competency? Can nursing students be considered unregulated workers? Join Oregon State Board of Nursing Executive Director Ruby Jason for answers to these important questions, and what nurses need to understand about assigning tasks during the COVID-19 crisis. [Click here](#) to register.

American Association of Critical Care Nurses COVID-19 Resources. AACN has specific [resources](#) they've made available related to caring for COVID-19 patients.

NEXT HUDDLE: FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 8 A.M.

In preparation for next week's huddle, consider the following questions:

Health Care Providers:

What are your current workforce needs? Nurses, respiratory technicians, environmental services?

How can education partners best support you? Training? Staff? Supplies (PPE, medical beds, monitors)?

What are your protocols for employees/students who have been exposed to individuals with unconfirmed COVID-like symptoms outside the work setting?

Universities/Colleges:

How are you deciding/evaluating whether to send students to clinical placements when there may not be adequate PPE onsite?

What updates can you share about the use of simulation for clinical placements?

How are you coordinating with students who may have left the state/area due to campus closures?

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