



# OREGON FEDERATION OF NURSES AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CHECK-UP



Information about You -- The Union at Kaiser Permanente

Issue 2006-7 October 31, 2006

OFNHP, Local 5017  
AFT Healthcare, AFL-CIO

## Executive Council

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Elex Tenney, Pro, Executive Vice President  
Jackie Farlinger-King, RDH, Secretary  
Jeff Harris RN, Treasurer

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Esther Haberman, TECH, Alt. Pension

**The last few months** have been very challenging given Kaiser's leadership transition and financial situation. We have challenged both Health Plan and NW Perm to recommit to working with us in Partnership. I want to thank each of you who made clear the importance of our Partnership and our unwillingness to take a step backwards. Your continued support for a full **Partnership**, with no acceptance of half-way measures, has been vital.

Though the work has been difficult and is not yet complete, I can report that we are seeing success and a new seriousness in the engagement by both Health Plan and NW Perm. If you are experiencing less than full partnering from the Health Plan managers and NW Perm leaders you work with, please let me know.

OFNHP, along with the other Coalition unions, Health Plan and NW Perm, are preparing to engage in an "**Ambulatory Care Redesign**" process.

*The impetus for this work is two-fold:*

- 1) We all know that we are not consistently and uniformly providing the access and service that our members expect (and that we expect to provide); and
- 2) The Northwest Region has the highest costs for delivering ambulatory care in the Kaiser system nationwide.

By working in Partnership we can achieve dramatic improvements in how we deliver care to our patients. Your input is vitally important to this process and I encourage each OFNHP member to make sure that your ideas on how we can improve how we care for our members to make your voice heard. This "Ambulatory Redesign" work is going to be some of the hardest and most important work that we will do together.

OFNHP continues to be on the frontlines of **Implementing our National Agreement** with Kaiser. I will continue to be a strong voice within the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions for rapid and complete implementation of our Agreement.

**Recently, OFNHP has had to file 2 grievances** (covering the RDH, RN and Tech Bargaining Units) related to violations of both local agreements and the National Agreement.

The grievances have to do with our new Time-off Benefit Enhancement and our Disability Insurance improvements.

- 1) Kaiser removed sick leave accrual from our on-call (no coded hours) members who work over 20 hours per week on average. Although there has been a lot of planning and preparation placed in implementing the new time-off benefit, there has been a lot of frustration. We have been challenged by computer system issues as well as interpretation issues;
- 2) Kaiser is not properly implementing our negotiated agreement on short- and long-term disability. OFNHP will continue enforcing our agreement with Kaiser in both letter and spirit. Look for updates on the progress of these grievances.

Finally, inside this edition of the Check-up you will find the **Electoral Recommendations** by your OFNHP Executive Council. I want to note that many of you have the opportunity to vote for a member of our Union, Jim Moeller, who is running for re-election as representative of District 49 in Vancouver. Like Jim, all the candidates we have endorsed share our vision of improving the healthcare system and protecting workers' rights to organize.

However you decide to vote, please ensure that you vote. Our democracy depends on the participation of informed citizens, such as the members of OFNHP.

In Solidarity, Kathy Geroux

## Oregon Endorsements

Governor – Ted Kulongoski

### Federal House Districts

1st District - David Wu  
3rd District - Earl Blumenauer  
4th District - Peter DeFazio  
5th District - Darlene Hooley

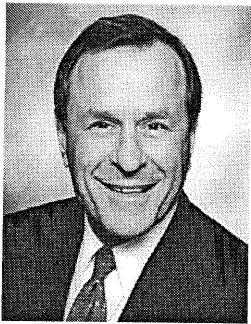
### State Senate Districts

SD 10: Paul Evans\*  
SD 11: Peter Courtney  
SD 16: Betsy Johnson  
SD 17: Brad Avakian  
SD 19: Richard Devlin  
SD 20: Kurt Schrader  
SD 24: Rod Monroe  
SD 26: Rick Metsger

*\*Current and Former members of our union – AFT.*

### State House Districts

HD 20: Vicki Berger  
HD 21: Brian Clem  
HD 27: Tobias Reed  
HD 28: Jeff Barker  
HD 30: David Edwards  
HD 31: Brad Witt (Fmr. OR AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer)  
HD 32: Deborah Boone  
HD 33: Mitch Greenlick\*  
HD 34: Suzanne Bonamici  
HD 34 Larry Galizio\*  
HD 37: Scott Bruun  
HD 38: Greg Macpherson  
HD 40: Dave Hunt  
HD 41: Carolyn Tomei\*  
HD 42: Diane Rosenbaum (CWA member)  
HD 43: Chip Shields\*  
HD 44: Tina Kotek  
HD 45: Jackie Dingfelder  
HD 46: Ben Cannon  
HD 47: Jeff Merkley  
HD 48: Mike Schaufler  
HD 49: Rob Brading



**Governor Ted Kulongoski** has a proven record as an advocate for strengthening healthcare, including signing the Mental Health Parity Bill last year. Gov. Kulongoski is committed to pursuing every option, large and small, to make health care more affordable and available to all Oregonians. The Governor's plan is practical, immediate and based on doing everything that works. He wants to use the proven tools to make health care more affordable, accessible and reliable right now, right here in Oregon.

The Portland Tribune has endorsed Ted and says, "Kulongoski has demonstrated the ability to lead in tough times, and in this campaign he has specified both a direction for Oregon and the means to move forward."

For more information, go to [http://www.tedforgov.com/issues/health\\_care/](http://www.tedforgov.com/issues/health_care/)

## Vote Yes on Measure 44 and No More.....

**Yes on Measure 44** — *"Everyday, healthcare professionals see the disastrous results of high cost prescription drugs. Our members at Kaiser Permanente and Providence know that when Oregonians have to make the choice to forego high-cost prescription drugs, they often end up in our emergency rooms, worse off than before. Ballot Measure 44 is a great way to pool our purchasing power in Oregon and drive down prescription costs for the many who go without coverage. Please join me in supporting this important ballot measure."*  
Kathy Geroux, RN President



**OPPOSE Measure 40** — An unnecessary measure that brings politics and special interests to the judiciary.

**OPPOSE Measure 41** — An unfair measure that will lead to an \$800 million reduction in the 2007-2009 state budget, 90% from education, health care and public safety.

**OPPOSE Measure 45** — Takes power away from the voters and will make legislators less accountable to the voters and more accountable to lobbyists.

**OPPOSE Measure 46** — This measure is an attack on the Free Speech clause of the Oregon Constitution. The Court of Appeals has already ruled that this proposal is unconstitutional and if approved by the voters, would likely be struck down by the Supreme Court.

**OPPOSE Measure 47** – Would limit or prohibit an individual's ability to contribute to campaigns or make individual contributions. The author of this measure anticipated that these limits immediately would be thrown out in appeals court. That's why it includes a provision to keep limits on political non-profits even if individual limits are prohibited. The result - an initiative system in the control of wealthy out-of-state individuals.

**OPPOSE Measure 48** - This a failed experiment imported from Colorado that places a limit on state spending to population growth, plus inflation. After implementing this policy, Colorado's public health system fell apart:

Colorado declined from 35<sup>th</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in K-12 education spending, and 35<sup>th</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> in higher education funding; Colorado ranks dead last both for percent of uninsured children and vaccination rates among all states, even as the share of low-income children lacking health insurance was reduced in the nation as a whole; Colorado has fallen from 20<sup>th</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> for the percentage of low-income non-elderly adults covered under health insurance.

The results of implementing this flawed idea in Oregon are predictable: erosion of the public health system, elimination of health care worker training programs, and severe cuts to other education and public service programs, and the Oregon Health Plan will take further cuts.

## Washington Endorsements

US Senate: Maria Cantwell

US House, 3<sup>rd</sup> District: Brian Baird

### Ballot Measures

#### **Vote NO on Initiative 920 – REPEALING ESTATE TAX:**

Cuts \$100 million per year from the Education Legacy Trust supporting K-12 school improvements to create a tax break from 250 multi-millionaires.

#### **Vote NO on Initiative 933 – PROPERTY**

**REGULATIONS:** Creates "pay or waive" system forcing taxpayers to pay millions for irresponsible land development, or exempt owners and corporations from land-use rules.

#### **Vote YES on Initiative 937 – ENERGY RESOURCE USE:**

Promoting the use of clean, renewable energy resources.

### State Senate & House –

District 15: Senate – Tomas Villanueva

District 17: House 2 – Deb Wallace

District 18: House 1 – Richard Curtis\*

House 2 – Julianne McCord

District 19: House 1 – Dean Takko

House 2 – Brian Blake

District 20: House 1 – Mike Rechner

District 49: House 1 – Bill Fromhold

House 2 – Jim Moeller\*

*\*Current and Former members of our union – AFT.*



## OFNHP Endorses Maria Cantwell for US Senate in Washington.

We need a national solution to the healthcare crisis. We need representatives in Washington that will focus on the needs of patients and the uninsured, not pharmaceutical and insurance companies. Senator Maria Cantwell acts on her belief that every American should have access to affordable quality health care. She is supportive of a variety of common sense approaches to improving our healthcare system, including programs to enable small businesses to provide affordable coverage to their employees; guarantees that all children have access to health care; and eliminating giveaways to pharmaceutical companies such as banning bulk purchasing of medications.

Find out more about Maria at <http://www.cantwell.com/issues/healthcare/>

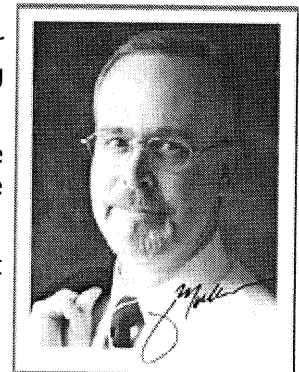
## Why Jim Moeller for House District 49?

Jim has been an Addiction Medicine Counselor at the **Kaiser Permanente** Cascade Park Clinic for over 20 years. He is a staunch union supporter with a strong and progressive record of advocating for workers' rights.

**As a healthcare worker**, Jim knows what the issues are. His record proves that he fights to make healthcare available to all. "Universal healthcare is a basic need, not a luxury: we need a single payer health care system modeled after Medicare or the Veterans Administration's care plans."

*The Columbian* endorsed Jim and says, "Moeller served two terms on Vancouver City Council. That background makes him valuable in the 49th Legislative District."

Find out more at Jim's official website at <http://www.jimmoeller.org/>



## 'Kentucky River' Decision Limits Union Rights

By a 3 to 2 vote, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled on October 3 that registered nurses who oversaw other employees and who were responsible for their performance could be considered supervisors, and their right to union membership challenged.

The ruling applies to nurses who act in a 'supervisory' role as little as 10 to 15 percent of the time, as long as they do so as a regular part of their job.

Although the nurses in the case were not involved in decisions to hire, fire, or promote workers, the majority of the NLRB ruled that their use of independent judgment made them supervisors.

The two dissenting members wrote: "Today's decision threatens to create a new class of workers under federal labor law: workers who have neither the genuine prerogatives of management, nor the statutory rights of ordinary employees."

Candice Owley, RN, chair of American Federation of Teachers Healthcare division, responded by saying: "This decision defies conventional logic. We all know who is a boss or a supervisor when we see one."

The New York Times editorial board criticized the NLRB's ruling, saying "responsibilities like making out a schedule do not amount to management. If they did, interns would be the only non-managers in many of today's workplaces."

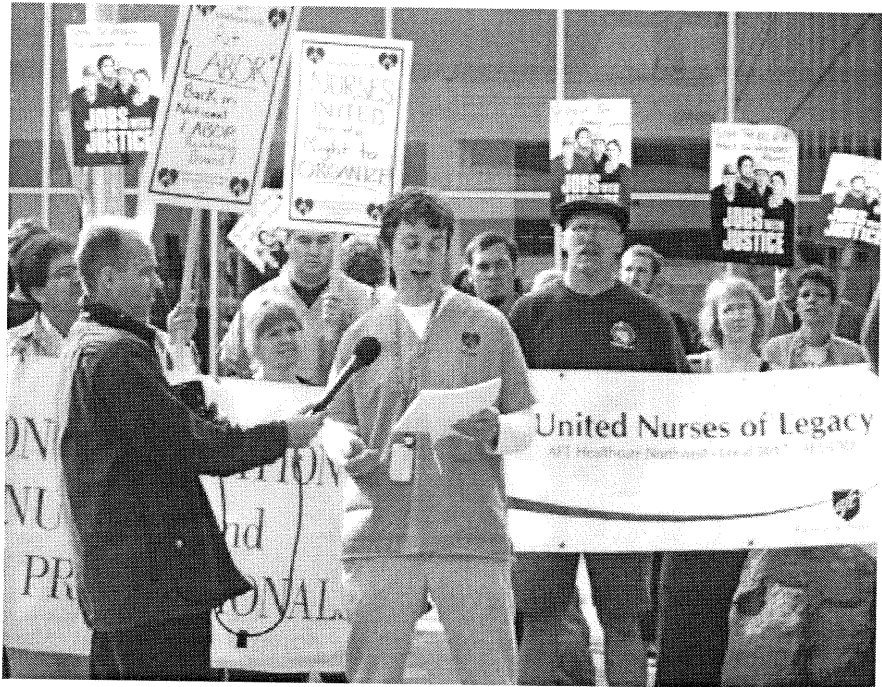
Paul Krugman wrote that the decision by the NLRB's Republican majority represented a continuation of decades of violations and misinterpretations of labor laws that have restricted a workers' right to organize. Krugman noted that **corporate profits have more than doubled because wages have remained flat despite increased productivity, and that the decline of unions was the cause.**

The editorial board of the Washington Post echoed Krugman's argument, noting that "de-unionization explains about 15 percent of the increase in wage inequality among men over the past quarter-century."

*We have negotiated an agreement with Kaiser that will completely protect us from this ruling within Kaiser.*

*That agreement will not stop the larger dynamic that this ruling fosters – the decline of union membership and strength nationwide.*

**OFNHP will continue to prioritize organizing unorganized healthcare workers and will join the rest of the labor movement to repeal this anti-union, anti-worker ruling. Stay tuned for details on how to join the fight.**



*OFNHP Vice President of Organizing Bruce Corkum, RN speaks out against anti-union ruling by labor board at the East Interstate Campus.*