

# Negotiations

# UPDATE

## **Mercy Hospital Wants Associates Back, Hospitals Work to Settle Negotiations**

CWA's strike at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo entered its fourth week Friday. Since the strike began on October 1, nearly 50 nurses have resigned from the hospital, including more than one dozen difficult to recruit intensive care unit (ICU) nurses. This will contribute to future staffing challenges at the hospital even after negotiations are settled and associates return to work. Many associates, physicians, and community members are expressing increased concern over the union's prolonged work stoppage and suspension of much-needed healthcare services at Mercy Hospital.

This week at the bargaining table, Catholic Health's hospitals and CWA Locals 1133 and 1168 have made progress on contract language about pharmacy benefits, prescription co-pays and overtime. The union continues to spend significant time in negotiations trying to secure contract language regarding uniforms that would allow associates to wear red on Thursdays.

CWA has the ability to end its strike so Mercy Hospital associates can return to work while the hospitals and union continue to negotiate. However, CWA leaders have repeatedly said the union is committed to strike for as long as it takes, despite the financial hardships it has created for its members and the incredible strain it has caused at other area hospitals as a result of the temporarily reduced services at Mercy Hospital.

Catholic Health shares the sentiments of our community, patients and families – we want our associates back at Mercy Hospital. We will continue to work in good faith with CWA to settle these negotiations for our associates at Mercy Hospital, Kenmore Mercy Hospital and Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus. We hope CWA will end its strike sooner than later, and look forward to the day when we can welcome Mercy Hospital associates back to work.

As a faith-based healthcare system, Catholic Health recognized the importance of continuing to provide healthcare benefits for striking associates, and we did so at a cost of \$1.3M to our system because we wanted to ensure our associates and their families were cared for in case of an illness or injury.

We greatly appreciate our caregivers' continued commitment to patients at Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Sisters of Charity Hospital and its St. Joseph Campus, and Mount St. Mary's Hospital as well as those in our Home & Community Based Care. CWA's strike has created challenges for our hospitals and our entire community. Our caregivers' ongoing support, dedication, and willingness to go above and beyond to fulfill our Mission, has enabled us to focus on delivering safe, high-quality care to those in need. We could not do this without you. We are eager to begin the healing process that will be essential for everyone to move forward together when CWA's strike is over.

The hospitals are doing everything they can to make progress with CWA in settling these contracts. As we continue to negotiate with transparency, our eyes are focused on the future, and our actions will continue to demonstrate respect and empathy for all our associates. We will provide additional updates as we have news to share.

**Because it's important to have the facts regarding bargaining, we will share regular *Negotiations Updates* with you. You may visit [www.chsbuffalo.org/negotiations](http://www.chsbuffalo.org/negotiations) at any time for the latest news and information related to bargaining and to review copies of these updates and other FAQs.**