

Negotiations UPDATE

Catholic Health Begins Sending Health Benefits Coverage Notices to Striking Associates

On October 25, Catholic Health announced it was exploring options – including whether to continue healthcare coverage for striking Mercy Hospital associates – if the union continued its strike into November. We further advised CWA leadership that if a tentative agreement was not reached by Saturday, October 30, we would begin sending notices to CWA-represented Mercy Hospital associates that Catholic Health would discontinue payment and administration of health benefit coverage. We began sending notices today. Catholic Health will resume payment and administration upon ratification of the tentative agreement by the membership.

Catholic Health's hospitals have been negotiating in good faith with CWA since February 2021. We worked with CWA through the weekend and late into the night on Friday and Saturday nights. Several times it appeared the parties were close to reaching tentative agreement, settling negotiations and ending the strike. Discussions for Mercy Hospital associates' return to work had begun. Around 6 am Sunday morning, talks broke down again. A key sticking point holding up reaching agreement for all 2,500 associates at Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo and Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus remained staffing for a few specific units.

Rather than negotiate on Sunday, CWA announced it wanted to "evaluate where we are at."

Catholic Health hospitals are standing firm on their fair, market-competitive offer that includes staffing language, which addresses associates' priorities as identified by CWA. The staffing proposal Catholic Health hospitals have given CWA presents a strong, long-term solution to address staffing challenges at our hospitals, the same challenges facing healthcare systems across New York and our country.

Staffing Proposal Details

The staffing model Catholic Health proposed is the most progressive approach to address staffing shortages of any hospital in our region. Not only does it comply fully with the New York State Safe Staffing law set to go into effect in January, but it goes far beyond.

Our proposal:

- Increases staffing to achieve agreed-upon ratios;
- Commits to staffing 10% above core departmental staffing, which means adding more than 250 new positions;
- Provides an additional incentive for associates to pick up shifts if staffing goals aren't met in a quarter; and
- Commits to implement the American Association of Critical Care Nurses' model of a Healthy Work Environment and hire a subject-matter expert to assist with implementation.

Wage Proposal Details

The hospitals' wage proposal would provide associates with:

Contract Year 1	A minimum 3.0% wage increase (which may be a lump-sum payment or a combination of a base wage increase and a lump-sum payment)
Contract Year 2	2.0% General Wage Increase (GWI)
Contract Year 3	2.5% GWI
Contract Year 4	2.75% GWI
Other Highlights:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage increases would be retroactive to the first full pay period of June 2021. • All associates would be migrated to common wage scales with additional step increases where applicable. • All associates would make at least \$15/hour. • We significantly reduced the number of associates who would receive a lump-sum payment and be "red circled." 	

Benefit Proposal Details

For benefits, the proposals would provide associates with:

Healthcare Coverage	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution rates: No change from current contract, including grandfathered provisions; New hires pay 20% while Catholic Health pays 80% of premium cost • Minor plan changes, including access to Catholic Health Specialty Physicians and Infusion Services with \$0 copays • Option of participating in the Hybrid, High-Deductible Plan that is available to other Catholic Health associates • CWA-represented associates will have access to Catholic Health's Specialty Pharmacy
Dental Coverage	
	No changes from the current contract
Retirement Plan	
	No changes from the current contract but Catholic Health will increase its funding to the plans.
PTO	
	No changes from the current contract language. Catholic Health would maintain current PTO accrual levels for all associates.

CWA Advertising Campaign

Since before negotiations began, CWA has been using a series of escalating pressure tactics. Some were harmless – like wearing red bouffants or replacing Catholic Health lanyards with a CWA-provided one. Over the past several months, the union's claims and tactics have increased in intensity and, in recent weeks, have become nastier – even dangerous.

You may now be watching CWA's television commercials, hearing radio ads or seeing its social media posts undermining the hard work of our nurses, healthcare workers, physicians and others who strive to provide the highest quality care to those in our community who turn to Catholic Health in their time of greatest need.

The recent rumors and claims made by CWA in their strike materials and advertisements are not truthful. They are not representative of our organization or of the individuals who work here and carry out our mission each day.

These union actions are intended to pressure employers at the bargaining table, but our patients, long-term care residents, and community know better. They see your commitment and compassion and know our mission and reputation for safe, high quality care was built long before CWA's strike and will endure long after.

Associates' Rights

Remember, CWA works for you. We've addressed the issues CWA has reported are priorities for our associates. Associates have the right to ask their union representatives to settle negotiations and to end the strike.

CWA Local 1133 can be reached at (716) 828-1133.

CWA Local 1168 can be reached at (716) 639-1168.

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 at any time for the latest news and information related to bargaining and to review copies of these updates and other FAQs.