

Negotiations **FAQs**

Answers to some frequently asked questions about strikes

What is a 10-day notice to strike?

In healthcare, unions are required to give hospitals a 10-day notice before a strike may take place. CWA Local 1133 delivered a 10-day notice to Mercy Hospital, indicating its intention to take the hospital's nurses and service, technical, and clerical associates on strike beginning at 6:00AM on October 1.

Does a 10-day notice mean a strike is inevitable?

No. During the 10-day period, we are willing to continue bargaining with the union. We hope to reach tentative agreements with the union and avoid a situation where the union takes associates on strike. The union also has the ability to withdraw its notice before the strike.

How will our hospital continue to serve patients if there is a strike?

We are committed to continuing to provide safe, high quality care in the event of a strike. We have a comprehensive strike contingency plan to ensure we will meet the needs of our patients. This plan includes hiring licensed, experienced temporary replacement nurses and other qualified healthcare workers from a professional staffing agency familiar with these types of situations to ensure we can maintain quality care and service for our patients.

If there is a strike, how long will it last?

If there is a strike, associates should be prepared for the likelihood of being out of work, unpaid by Mercy Hospital, for at least seven (7) days.

The union's threat of a strike requires us to take extensive measures to ensure we can continue to provide high quality patient care – even if the strike doesn't happen. As a result of the union's strike notification, we have arranged to hire licensed, experienced temporary nurses and qualified healthcare workers through a respected staffing agency to help ensure the welfare and safety of our patients.

Will CWA-represented associates get paid during a strike?

Mercy Hospital will not pay striking associates and associates will not be permitted to use PTO during a strike. Associates should ask their union whether it will provide strike pay and under what conditions.

Mercy Hospital associates may want to ask CWA's leaders:

- Are associates required to participate in CWA's strike?
- How will CWA discipline and/or fine associates if they decide not to participate?
- How many hours/day and days/week will CWA expect striking associates to walk its picket line?
- Do CWA representatives get paid by the union while striking associates are not getting paid?
- Does CWA provide striking associates with financial support during the strike?
- Can Mercy Hospital replace striking associates?

Will associates still have benefits if there's a strike?

Benefits may be suspended immediately effective the first day of the strike. For instance, **PTO may not be used while associates are on strike, and associates generally do not accrue PTO, seniority or receive retirement contributions for the duration of the strike.**

If associates want to continue existing levels of health and dental coverage, they may need to complete required documents and pay the COBRA rate (which is the employee plus employer portions of the monthly premiums and an administrative fee generally totaling 102% of the combined employee/employer cost).

Will I be allowed to cross the picket line?

CWA-represented associates will not be permitted to cross the picket line to work at Mercy Hospital during the strike.

Will I be allowed to come back to work immediately after the strike is over?

It is likely that associates will not be able to return to work immediately after CWA Local 1133's strike since we are required to guarantee temporary staff a minimum number of work days. We know many of our associates would not want to abandon their patients – even for one day – nor would they want to be unable to return to work at our hospital for several days. CWA Local 1133-represented associates should understand that if the union proceeds with its strike, they may lose a week or more of pay.

If I don't agree with the CWA Local 1133 taking associates on strike, what can I do?

Tell CWA Local 1133 how you feel. Contact your steward or the union at (716) 828-1133. We hope the union doesn't take associates on strike. We would prefer to continue bargaining in good faith to reach an agreement.

Are striking associates allowed to enter the hospital during the strike or while the temporary staff are providing care to our patients?

Striking CWA Local 1133-represented associates may not enter hospital property unless receiving medical care, visiting a patient or performing other legitimate business.

How would a strike help to reach agreement on a new contract?

In our view, a strike does nothing to advance labor contract talks. CWA Local 1133's intent with a strike is to rally members and draw attention to the union.

Because it's important to have the facts regarding the progress of negotiations, we will share regular Frequently Asked Questions 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 FAQs and other Negotiation Updates.