

Negotiations

UPDATE

Progress on Side-Table Topics

We were able to make progress on side-table topics for Kenmore Mercy Hospital today. Now there is only one open item for the tech contract and approximately five open items for the registered nurse contract. Only a few open matters remain for the Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus contracts. More than 20 articles must still be negotiated for the Mercy Hospital contracts plus our common table matters that cover more than 2,200 associates across the three hospitals.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below we provide answers to questions associates have asked.

Q: What are the hospitals doing to address staffing?

A: Catholic Health has hired nearly 1,200 new associates, including 230 registered nurses, since the beginning of the year despite the nationwide labor shortage. Our hospitals will continue to work aggressively with recruiters at all levels—locally, across our state and around the country. We also launched a recruitment advertising campaign on TV and social media and have attended more than 50 job fairs in the past year.

As discussed with CWA leadership, we are taking several steps to ensure proper staffing in our hospitals, including:

- Providing a \$10 per hour bonus for registered nurses, \$8 per hour bonus for technical associates and \$5 for service/clerical staff to pick up additional shifts; and
- Assigning an additional recruiter to the hiring team at Mercy Hospital.

Meanwhile, weeks ago CWA rejected the hospitals' Retention & Recruitment initiative. It was designed to help fill RN, NA, and ITA vacancies and retain night shift staff. Our proposal included offering competitive payment incentives to FT and PT associates after orientation and at 12, 18, 24, and 36 months of service in the Med/Surg and Critical Care Float Pools, including new hires and current associates who sign a Recruitment & Retention Agreement.

This proposal would have gone a long way in filling vacancies in the float pools, which help maintain staffing levels so associates don't have to be pulled from their home units to fill in for call-offs, no-shows and increased census on other units. The union rejected this proposal without providing a counterproposal or alternative to resolve this staffing issue. Meanwhile, the union's staffing ratio proposal contributes nothing to fill vacant positions in the midst of a nationwide labor shortage. However, there is a growing trend in healthcare to offer sign-on bonuses. Offering these types of financial incentives now, would help us fill job vacancies and retain staff in hard-to-fill positions.

The initiative has been implemented at Sisters of Charity Hospital. So far we have added 18 new registered nurses.

Q: Does CWA Local 1133 really have Mercy Hospital associates' support to strike?

A: The union reported that 97 percent of union representatives at Mercy Hospital voted to support a strike. Union leaders conducted the strike authorization vote rather than an independent agency like the American Arbitration Association, which some unions use to protect the legitimacy and impartiality of internal union votes.

It remains unclear how many Mercy Hospital associates participated in the strike authorization vote and whether a majority of the 2,000 associates CWA will lead on strike truly are in favor of the union's work stoppage. Since only about 18 percent (402 individuals) of Mercy Hospital associates participated in CWA's *Staffing & Working Conditions Survey*, the number of Mercy Hospital associates who participated in the strike vote and who may be in favor of it may also be low.

Q: What can I do if I don't want to go on strike?

A: Associates have the legal right to tell CWA how they feel if they don't want to go on strike and prefer that CWA settles negotiations with Catholic Health hospitals without a strike. Associates can share their views with CWA Local 1133 leadership at (716) 828-1133.

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.