

# Negotiations

# UPDATE

## Days Before Strike, Sides Are Tens of Millions of Dollars Apart; Preparations Continue for CWA Local 1133's Work Stoppage

Despite progress at negotiations through the weekend, the hospitals and union remain tens of millions of dollars apart with only days before CWA Local 1133 takes approximately 2,000 Mercy Hospital associates on strike. The hospitals remain committed to negotiating in good faith with the union to reach agreement on fair contracts that provide market-competitive wages and benefits and enable us to continue providing safe, high-quality care. We hope the union is as committed as we are to reaching a deal and averting its strike.

### Hospitals' Staffing Proposal

Today, the parties discussed several side table items. They also continued to discuss wages and staffing. The union presented the same staffing proposal it previously shared with the hospitals. The hospitals countered with a staffing proposal that would include, among other provisions, a commitment to increase its staffing resources 10% above the budgeted average daily census for areas at Kenmore Mercy Hospital and Mercy Hospital.

### Strike Preparations

While negotiations continue, both sides are preparing for the possibility an agreement cannot be reached by Friday. Incident command at Mercy Hospital and across the system have been meeting daily, and system and hospital leaders been having regular conversations with various governmental agencies at the state, county and local levels. The first group of temporary replacement workers began orientation on Sunday and more arrived Monday.

For its part, CWA today reminded associates that it hasn't revoked its 10-day notice to strike. Some Mercy Hospital associates are questioning whether the union actually has the support for the strike it claims to have. CWA's Constitution requires that "a majority of the members voting shall determine whether or not a strike shall be called."<sup>1</sup> This means that if only 100 out of 2,000 members participated in the strike vote and 97 voted to strike, the union has authority with "97% in favor" to take all 2,000 members on strike. Other associates are complaining about being assigned to work picket line shifts over the weekend.

### Possible Union Strike Cost for Associates

Mercy Hospital will not pay associates during CWA Local 1133's strike. According to the union, its Member Relief Fund is "extremely healthy and has over \$400 million in it."<sup>2</sup> However, CWA will not provide strike pay for the first two weeks of the union's strike. CWA says its strike will be "indefinite," meaning that it has not set or announced when its strike would end.

<sup>1</sup> CWA Constitution: Permanent Rules Governing Conduct of CWA Convention and Internal Appeals. Amended July 2019. Article XVIII – Strikes. §6 Procedure for Local Strike Vote. 32.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.safestaffingbuffalo.org/strike-frequently-asked-questions>

We encourage each CWA-represented Mercy Hospital associate to consider their personal financial situation and how the union’s strike may affect them and their families. Below is a table that illustrates the possible lost income for certain positions during weeks 1 and 2 of the strike.

Mercy Hospital Position	Average Hourly Rate	Gross Weekly Pay	Associate Pay from Hospital During CWA Strike	CWA Strike Pay (Weeks 1-2)	Possible Lost Income for Associate During CWA Strike (Weeks 1-2)	
					1 Week	2 Weeks
RN 1	\$39.70	\$1,488.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,488.75	\$2,977.50
RN 2	\$47.87	\$1,795.13	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,795.13	\$3,590.26
EVS Associate	\$14.97	\$561.38	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$561.38	\$1,122.76
Radiology Tech	\$29.90	\$1,121.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,121.25	\$2,242.50
Secretary (Grade 7)	\$21.07	\$790.13	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$790.13	\$1,580.26

The union has the ability to withdraw its 10-day notice before its planned strike begins.

Associates have the legal right to tell CWA if they don’t want to go on strike and prefer that the union settles negotiations with Catholic Health hospitals without a work stoppage. Associates can share their views with CWA Local 1133 leadership at (716) 828-1133. Associates also may want to attend the union’s meetings later this week to hear from union leaders in the days leading up to the strike the union plans to launch at 6 a.m. on Friday, October 1.

Location: Knights of Columbus, 261 South Legion Drive	
Wednesday, September 29	3:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, September 30	7:30 a.m.

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.