

Negotiations UPDATE

Working Toward a Fair and Sustainable Agreement

Last Tuesday, we received the Union's response to our initial economic proposal. While there was some movement from their previous \$400 million proposal, the revised proposal still totals nearly \$370 million — a figure that continues to far exceed what is financially viable in today's healthcare environment.

The Union's proposed wage increases of 12%, 7%, 5%, and 5% over four years are not only well above current market trends, but also significantly higher than what was recently agreed to at Kaleida Health. The Union also disagrees and continues to question our attempts to upgrade 44 Service, Technical and Clerical positions to place them in market-appropriate grades. Despite the economic pressures facing our hospitals, we felt this was the fairest and most practical way to address existing wage disparities within our STC group and remain competitive in a climbing market.

Hospitals Respond with Balanced, Responsible Offer

We remain committed to reaching an agreement that supports our associates without compromising our ability to deliver high quality care to our patients, residents, and the communities we serve. With that goal in mind, we returned to the bargaining table on Thursday with a revised offer that addresses key concerns.

Our updated proposal includes:

- An enhanced RN wage scale to support recruitment and retention, resulting in a first-year average wage increase of 4.6% for RNs.
- Wage increases of 2% in the first year, plus market upgrades to 44 Service, Technical, and Clerical positions, followed by increases of 2%, 2.25%, and 2.25% over the next three years.
- For First Choice Comprehensive Health Plan members:
 - No pharmacy restrictions or change in co-pays for generic prescriptions.
 - No change in co-pays for high-cost specialty medications (currently 11 medications designated under the Catholic Health Pharmacy program) when filled at Sisters Hospital Pharmacy. Higher co-pays would apply if those 11 medications are filled at non-Catholic Health pharmacies.
 - Increased co-pays for high-cost specialty medications, with no pharmacy location restrictions, that are currently not available under the Catholic Health Pharmacy Program.
- For First Choice Hybrid/High Deductible Health Plan members:
 - No change in pharmacy co-pays from the current contract.
- Standardized shift differentials across contracts for fairness and consistency.
- Continued 100% co-pay discount for St. Joseph Campus associates who use the SJC Emergency Department.
- Bereavement leave for stillbirth pregnancy losses.

A Call for Realism and Partnership

We must be realistic about the financial challenges facing healthcare providers. With pending cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, and private insurers continually looking to reduce reimbursements, hospitals are being asked to do more with less — every day.

The Union's proposals may sound appealing, but they do not reflect the economic reality we face. **We believe in investing in our workforce with competitive wages, high quality health plans, and strong pension benefits, but sustaining those investments year after year requires some compromise.**

With a sincere desire to meet the needs of our associates, we will continue to come to the bargaining table with solutions to help us achieve our shared goals.

Our Commitment to Progress

We had hoped for a more balanced counteroffer from the Union that would bring us closer to a tentative agreement. To help move negotiations forward:

- The Hospitals and the Union engaged an impartial mediator to help both parties find common ground.
- We also agreed to a two-week contract extension for Mercy Hospital that is set to expire on August 15 (the other contracts have no expiration).

We remain hopeful that, through collaboration and compromise, we can reach a fair and sustainable agreement.

Have Questions?

If you have any questions about negotiations, please scan this QR code or visit our Negotiations Website at: chsbuffalo.org/negotiations. There, you can find more information or submit questions anonymously to be answered in an upcoming Negotiations FAQ.

