



TO: Catholic Health Associates, Managers, and Physicians

FROM: Joyce Markiewicz, President & CEO

DATE: September 8, 2025

RE: Mercy Hospital Strike Authorization Vote

As you may know, associates at Mercy Hospital are voting today to give Communications Workers of America (CWA) the authority to call a strike. While this does not mean a strike is imminent, the results of this vote give the Union the authority to issue a 10-day strike notice at any time.

Calling a strike before either side has presented their final offer would be premature—and deeply troubling, especially while we are in active discussions. We will be back at the bargaining table tomorrow, fully committed to reaching fair and equitable agreements for our associates at Mercy Hospital, Kenmore Mercy, and St. Joseph Campus.

Although a strike would directly involve only Mercy Hospital associates, we know from experience that its impact would be felt across our system—affecting patients, staff, and the broader community. We cannot sustain a repeat of what happened four years ago and still maintain the level of services our community expects and deserves. If the CWA chooses to call a strike, our focus will shift to minimizing any risk or disruption their actions may cause, to help protect the wellbeing of our community.

What's most discouraging is that we share many of the same goals as the Union: competitive wages and benefits, safe staffing levels, and policies that help our associates deliver the highest quality care. We want to work collaboratively with the Union, not in opposition.

What's equally disheartening is that we approached these negotiations differently than we had in the past, respecting the value of our associates. We want to have open and honest discussions that respect each other's point of view. If we approach one another as enemies, we will never find a place of trust.

Throughout these negotiations, our goal has been to:

- Provide wages that are equal to—or better than—those offered by other healthcare providers in our community. We worked hard to put a better wage package on the table up front, with our most recent offer exceeding nursing wages at Kaledia Health, and upgrading base wages for 45 service, technical, and clerical positions to keep us competitive in the local market.

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- Maintain health benefits that allow our associates and their families to receive medical care that is affordable and of the highest quality;
- Continue to be an employer of choice that supports the professional growth of our associates with numerous tuition assistance, advancement, and other educational opportunities.

Achieving these goals requires a balanced, give-and-take negotiation process. Progress is impossible when one side is expected to do all the giving. The contract we have on the table right now is already \$90 million stronger than our previous contract—and rather than come to the table with reasonable proposals, the Union comes with demands that are simply not achievable given today's economic climate, the local job market, and looming Medicaid cuts that further strain patients and providers.

While the strike we lived through four years ago affected our entire organization, no one suffered more than our colleagues at Mercy Hospital. Their lives were disrupted for nearly six weeks, and they lost thousands of dollars in wages that can never be recovered. Many have told us they do not want to go through that again.

As President & CEO of Catholic Health, my pledge to associates at Mercy Hospital is to:

- Listen with compassion to understand your needs and what is most important to you
- Be transparent about what is and is not possible and why
- Work together with our Union partners to come up with just solutions
- Affirm the dignity, respect, and worth of every associate

We urge the Union to work with us to achieve our shared goals and avoid damaging disruption to our associates, our patients, and our community. We cannot end every negotiation we have with CWA in a strike. The risk it poses to our system—and more importantly, to healthcare in our community—is reaching a tipping point. It has taken four years to reach a level of financial security that is allowing us to move forward with some optimism, but we still have a long way to go to ensure long-term sustainability.

In their most recent communication, the Union posed the question, "What would Jesus do?" We look to the parable of the Good Samaritan, in answering that question— He would never walk away from those in need, especially our patients.