Hospitals Present New Proposal; Positive Progress Being Made

Last week, the Hospitals and the Union had productive discussions at the bargaining table. Both sides reviewed each other's economic proposals and reached tentative agreement on several non-economic articles, helping to clear the way to focus on the economic proposals during the final phase of bargaining.

With guidance from an impartial mediator, we are seeing positive momentum at the bargaining table. **This progress is bringing our Hospitals and the Union closer to reaching overall tentative agreements.** The Union presented a new economic proposal last Thursday, while the Hospitals responded yesterday with an updated economic package.

The Union is now proposing wage increases of 5% each year, while the Hospitals are proposing 2.25% – **numbers that are moving closer together and are more in line with what was agreed to recently at Kaleida Health.**

New Proposals Include Increases for Every Bargaining Unit

The Hospitals' latest economic proposal offers several enhancements:

· **Additional increases to the RN wage scale,** with RN rates starting at $41.79/hour.
· **Additional upgrades to four technical positions for a total of 48 upgrades** to a variety of STC positions, making them more competitive in the local market.
· Changes to pharmacy benefits and health plan co-pays **set to take effect on January 1, 2026** (see article on the right).
· **Higher night and evening shift differentials** for STC bargaining units.
· **Increases to charge and preceptor pay** for STC bargaining units.
· **Staffing incentive pay increases** to $15/hour for RNs, $12/hour for technical positions, and $10/hour for service and clerical roles.
· **Increases in tuition assistance.**

Effective Attendance Policies Support Safe Staffing

Another critically important area we continue to bargain over is our proposed Attendance Policy. While we have made great strides in recruitment and retention over the last several years, attendance issue such as unexcused absences, no-shows, and frequent tardiness continue to impact staffing.

Too often, associates who come to work as scheduled carry the weight for those who don't. Striking a balance that meets the needs of all associates will help ensure safe staffing within our hospitals. **We believe a strong attendance policy — one that supports reasonable and consistent staffing, along with other policies that help, rather than hinder our staffing needs — is essential to ensure safe staffing levels and a fair workload for everyone.**

A Closer Look at Health Insurance Premiums

Just like other types of insurance, health insurance premiums continue to rise with each new enrollment period. Catholic Health has worked hard to keep our First Choice premiums from increasing as much as other plans in our community. But with the cost of some medications skyrocketing – as much as $1 million per year – and more people turning to ERs instead of urgent care centers or their primary care doctors, controlling healthcare costs and your premium costs is getting harder each year.

That's why we're incentivizing associates to use the Sisters Hospital Pharmacy (with free delivery to work or home) for just 11 extremely high-cost prescription medications, and for others to pay slightly higher co-pays for other costly medications and/or medical services.

Taking these steps helps save millions of dollars in pharmacy and medical costs and keeps health insurance premiums down for everyone – including you!

You can also help control your premium costs by choosing a high-deductible health plan if it's the right fit for you. To explore your health insurance options, join us at one of our Open Enrollment events across Catholic Health this November.

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.