

Negotiations UPDATE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CWA BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS

Hospitals New Economic Package Makes More Positive Moves

We know associates at Mercy Hospital may have concerns about the possibility of a strike, especially remembering what happened four years ago. Things today, however, are very different.

We've made real progress addressing staffing—a flashpoint in the last negotiations—even adding staff in many areas. We've improved wages to levels that are competitive or better than other providers, including Kaleida Health. We've maintained health insurance premium contributions in plans that are among the best in the region. And we've preserved pension funding, another critical issue in past negotiations.

Knowing this, it's unclear why the Union is calling for a strike vote now, before either party has presented its final offer. If it's meant to force us make moves, we're already doing that. That's how bargaining works. A strike vote is a serious step, one that risks disrupting our associates' and their families' lives, patient care, and healthcare services across our community. Progress is being made and we hope the focus remains on constructive solutions.

The new offer we have on the table takes several positive steps forward, reinforcing our commitment to see these negotiations reach a successful conclusion, without a strike. We hope the Union will demonstrate the same level of commitment, so we can bring bargaining to a close soon.

Our latest offer includes several improvements, directly reflecting issues raised in bargaining:

- Increased GWI to 2.75%, 2.5%, 2.5%, 2.5%, with multiple upgrades and a new RN wage scale, resulting in even higher first year wage increases. The total GWI in the last 3 years of this proposal (7.5%) is better than the total increase in the last 3 years of the prior contract (7.25%).
- Increased Service/Clerical lead differential to \$1.50/hour.
- Increased RN Charge Pay differential to \$3.00/hour.
- Accepted Union's proposal for Preceptor Pay: \$2.00/hour for Service/Clerical, \$2.75 for Techs, and \$3.00 for RNs.
- Withdrew proposal to pause accrual of Extended Sick Leave (ESL) while on ESL.
- Increased RN Staffing Incentive from \$15 to \$18/ hour. Techs are at \$12 and Service/Clerical at \$10.

While back-and-forth discussions are a normal part of bargaining, our shared goals remain clear: what's best for our associates, our patients, and our community—and what will keep our hospitals strong. If we do that, everyone benefits.

With our latest offer, we've shown real movement forward. Let's continue this positive momentum together and bring these negotiations to a successful close.

Make Sure You Have All the Facts About our Contract Offer

It's important that you fully understand the contract package that's on the table. It's one of the strongest we've ever put forward—offering meaningful wage increases, securing important benefits, and maintaining the things that matter most to you.

We know **staffing** is a critical issue and have worked hard to achieve the best ratios we've ever had. Many of our proposals are focused on maintaining the staffing levels that are important to you and the patients we serve.

Attendance issues are one of the biggest factors affecting staffing—not the occasional ones that everyone has from time to time, but the habitual call-ins, late arrivals, or early departures (sometimes with nearly half a shift remaining). It's unfair to our hardworking associates who have to pick up the slack. The changes we are proposing to our Attendance Policy will help fix this.

Quality health insurance is also very important to our associates. When you compare plans in our community, ours are among the best. Maintaining this level of quality comes at a high cost. Making small changes help keep costs down and our plans strong for everyone.

Wages are another key issue we hear about when bargaining begins. Keeping our wages competitive helps attract and retain more associates, reduces our reliance on agency staffing, and lessens the need to offer large sign-on bonuses. Through a combination of general wage increases and targeted upgrades, our nurses will be the among highest paid in WNY, and our STC associates will be more competitive in the local market.

It's important to understand what's actually in the contract before you vote on whether a strike is in your best interest. If you don't know, you have every right to ask the Union—and ask for specifics—so you know exactly what you have to gain and what you have to lose.

Lastly, your vote is private, confidential, and IMPORTANT. Whether you support or oppose a strike, your voice must be heard. Not voting has the same effect as voting "yes," so if you don't want a strike, it's critical that you vote.

This is a very good contract. Make sure you have all the facts.