



# We Are Moving Forward In Unity

We are united in bargaining and we are moving forward with our staffing, wages and benefits proposals. During this latest round of negotiations we proposed new language around investigations, new employee orientation, float pay, service workers having parity with the nurses on premiums and benefits, and discipline and discharge language. Our bargaining proposals uphold our values and protect our patients.

**Our next bargaining date is January 21!**

We have a proposal for wages that would benefit all of us, but a specific issue we discussed during our latest negotiation relates to a new, higher pay grade for OB and endo techs. Surgical techs help perform endo tech tasks — why should one group be paid less while working side by side? Our proposed wages will help recruit, and most importantly retain, our most experienced co-workers.



“Currently in the psychiatric unit we have five or six nurse techs. We have had three leave recently because of low wages, and they are going to skilled nursing facilities where their base wage is way more than it is here. As a nurse I rely on the techs greatly, they’re important to our unit. Because of this, it has caused holes in the unit where we have two nurses on the floor working as nurse techs and are starting over to cover the tech job. That’s wasteful of our resources, but an increase in the wage scales would fix that wastefulness.” **Tim Jennings, RN, 1N**

We are proposing a new contract article about investigations to guarantee more communication and honesty from our management when there is an investigation taking place. When a disciplinary action can result from a meeting identified as “feedback,” an employee should be notified prior to the meeting if the meeting could result in disciplinary action. And the employee shall be notified when a feedback meeting becomes an investigation, therefore having the opportunity to have representation.

It’s important that we know our contract and the rights and benefits we have as union members. It’s important to familiarize ourselves with contract language because if we do, it’s less likely management will take advantage of us.



“We need transparency for the disciplinary system. You show up for a meeting and your manager tells you have been ‘coached’ or ‘counseled’ on

certain dates, yet your recollection of the interaction was just a ‘how are things and what do you remember about this incident or that discussion?’ Next thing you know, you’re being written up for a pattern that you had no idea was a concern. If there is a problem, tell me what it is so I can make corrective action before it turns into disciplinary action.”

**Heather Sparks, RN, ED**



“Recently, there was a grievance won by a clinic nurse over incentive pay. Clinic nurses are covered by the contract. The contract states that the initial effort to cover core staffing holes will be through the use of staff who are less than full time, covering those holes at the regular rates of pay. In situations where it is not possible to cover core staffing in this manner, full-time and part-time nurses will be offered 1.5x the regular rate

of pay, plus \$5 per hour. Different managers have dealt with this language differently. For your clarity and your manager’s clarity, please question any extra shift as to whether incentive pay kicks in. It is my hope that all union employees read our contract once or twice yearly as a refresher. This is also helpful for me. Something new might just jump out that you had forgotten, or perhaps wasn’t personally relevant before. Kudos to those who are willing to file a grievance. The contract is only as good as its enforcement. Please contact a union delegate or call your union representative if you have questions. You can also go online at [www.seiu1199nw.org/chapters/vmmh/](http://www.seiu1199nw.org/chapters/vmmh/) to see a list of your delegates or to review a contract!”

**Trish Bowman, RN, 3EW**



“For our service contract on wages we are proposing a path to a \$15 starting wage like other places in our state. Our current minimum wage is \$12.50 and on Jan 1 it increased to \$13.50. We are proposing a pathway to \$15 so people east of the mountains can also make a decent living. We also proposed a 5% wage increase for everyone. We all know staffing is an issue at

the hospital and as a bargaining team we feel we need better wages to recruit new workers and keep the ones we have.”

**Erica Corral, 1N CNA**

