

Our voices and our union contract matter: Management needs to respect both

The psychological, physical and financial strains faced by healthcare workers are unprecedented. As frontline workers we acknowledge the strains our hospital is under, but we need our employer to understand the strains that we are under. The hospital is circumventing the processes laid out in our contracts by failing to communicate with their own leadership team that staffing and schedule reductions **MUST BE VOLUNTARY** first. We are still seeing various departments implement reductions and not following our bargained agreements.

We held a virtual negotiation with management's team on Monday and they agreed they need to follow the processes in our contracts. Only exempt employees (those not represented by the union) are subject to whatever changes management wants to implement. For union-represented employees, the rules are different.

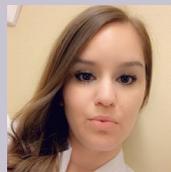
Here is what management committed to:

- Staffing and schedule reductions or furloughs are voluntary at this time.
- The mandated reductions that appear to be happening in lab, dietary and EVS are in violation of the contract and the employer will correct these deviations from our CBA.
- Employees who agree to take a furlough may apply for unemployment which will not be contested by the employer.
- Employees who agree to take a furlough will maintain their health insurance. They will only be responsible for their out-of-pocket share of the premium they would have paid had they maintained their FTE.

While management has committed to the bargaining process, we must continue to show our unity in order to protect our contract and ensure better standards for ourselves and our patients. The unity we showed when hundreds of us signed a petition demanding protection for quarantine and illness and hazard pay is only the beginning. Our stories matter and we will share them with our community if that's what it takes to protect healthcare workers, our patients and our families.



"Healthcare workers are providing the best quality of care as we can with the limited supplies given. Reusing PPE is not ideal, therefore putting our healthcare workers at risk every day. This puts a significant strain on all of us, both mentally and physically. In addition, we are now worried about our job security due to the pandemic's effect on the hospital's financial state. At this point in time, it feels like our employer is thinking more about the numbers instead of the wellbeing of its employees. I have been taught safety comes first, not only for our patients, but for ourselves too. We are definitely not feeling essential; if we don't take care of ourselves, how will we take care of your loved ones?" **Karen Mae Arreola, BSN, RN, 2EW Oncology, Stroke, Telemetry & Medical Overflow, Clinical Informatics Champion**



"The hospital has reduced many of our hours. However, per our contract, that needs to be done voluntarily at this point. The hospital has agreed with us and commits to correct this in any department where mandated reductions have occurred for those of us who are union. What is also very important for us is recognizing the risks we take. I have seen very talented phlebotomists leave because they can make more at Costco earning hazard pay. Like everyone else, lab staff is essential." **Deshawn Owersland, Phlebotomist**



"We are the front line healthcare workers. We are here every day without refusing, knowing we could get infected and infect our families. This is hard on us, and management is lying to us and forcing us to cut our hours, forcing us to sign a letter we really don't understand. Our management is saying if we don't sign this anonymous letter we are going to have consequences, maybe lose our jobs. We are worried already about the pandemic and our families, and management is treating us with disrespect without any consideration. We have the right to claim our full-time job, we are working here for several years. We are partners willing to collaborate but management is not doing this right. We do not want anyone to lose their job, we are just asking management to treat us with respect and to do the right thing." **Rudolpho Silva, Utility Tech**

Answers to questions we are hearing from our co-workers

Do I have to take a Temporary Reduction of my FTE?	NO. Right now, it's voluntary.
When asked to go Low Census can I supplement with benefited hours?	Yes, you can supplement your time.
If I want a Temporary Reduction, can I?	Yes, you can let your manager know.
How long will the Temporary Reduction last?	The cap is 30 days.
If I Volunteer to take a Temporary Reduction can I apply for unemployment?	Yes, you can apply for unemployment.
If I take a temporary reduction or Furlough can VMMH call me back at anytime?	Yes, VMMH can call you back at any time.

Cease and Desist letter sent to VMMH



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

April 23, 2020

Sent via email

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RE: Cease and Desist

Dear Carrie,

SEIU Healthcare 1199NW demands that the Employer cease and desist from its unilateral change to the working conditions but not limited to the Cath Lab, Laboratory, Dietary, and Environmental Services department. The Employer has a duty to notify the Union in advance of any changes in working conditions and meet to discuss the effects on members of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW. When we met on April, 21, 2020 the Employer agreed to follow up with managers that were mandating the change rather than asking for volunteers. But the managers in these departments have not retracted the communication. Our bargaining unit members still believe they must sign up to be furloughed. We believe the following are changes to the current practice that are negatively impacting our members: schedule changes, FTE not being restored, use of benefit time when on low census.

Schedules, working conditions are important issues for our members and the significant changes that the Employer is moving forward with are unacceptable. Therefore the Union demands that Virginia Mason Memorial meet with the Union by next week to discuss the effects that the planned changes will have on the members of SEIU 1199NW.

Additionally the Union demands that no changes are made until after the Virginia Mason Memorial Hospital and SEIU 1199NW have this meeting.

We were hopeful that managers would understand that this was a misunderstanding and thing would be corrected immediately.

Please reach out to me by phone or email.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Raul Lopez'.

Raul Lopez
Lead Organizer
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