

OUR UNITY = SAFETY AND SECURITY IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

Because we are a member-led union we are all able to be heard. This week our strong nurse leaders on our furlough bargaining team all across the State of Washington came together to bargain a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to protect and guide our members through the budget crisis created by the pandemic. We were able to create an agreement that protects the interests of our members across the state, and protects the safety of the communities we serve. We put in two days of bargaining on an issue management believed they could address in a few hours, because we knew how important it was to address furloughs thoughtfully for our members.



“Management gave us an unreasonably short timeline to discuss furloughs. We bargained for two days with a diverse team and met the needs of many. In the middle of a recession we prevailed to prevent hundreds of furlough days. They pushed but we pushed harder. We will not compromise our integrity or the safety of staff or patient care. We are stronger together.”

Becky Bailey RN3, WSH

We moved the state agencies to remove over 100 days of furloughs for many members to ensure patient and staff safety, including;

- The ward-based RN3s at WSH will not be furloughed the four days through July 25th
- The Incident Management Team RNs at DOH will not be furloughed
- They will correct the mistakes that put direct patient care nurses on the furlough list at Lakeland Village

We stated firmly that we could not compromise when it comes to patient and staff safety. Our MOU says the furlough days should not impact sufficient staffing for the needs of the patients or the safety of those of us in direct care roles. While the agencies felt strongly about the need to set furlough days through the month of July, our unity moved them to agree to allow flexibility and choice for the once-a-month furlough days for August through November.



“The employer needs to include us in decision-making that impacts our work and lives. Not just say, ‘Do this because we said so.’ When they include us in the

discussions and decision-making, it increases buy-in from those affected by their decisions and leaves employees feeling recognized and valued. When they make arbitrary decisions that impact us in a personal way, people will leave and seek out employment where they feel valued by management. That’s why it’s so important that we were able to bargain this agreement because it takes into consideration our expertise and our needs, not just what they want to do.”

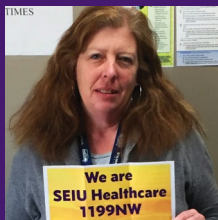
Sharon Stephens, RN, RCS

WE WON ON FINANCIAL SECURITY

- We added language that protect retirement, leave accruals, and benefits.
- We protected holiday pay by insuring that they could not designate a holiday as a furlough day.
- We maintain our 3% raises to begin July 1, 2020.
- Our pre-approved vacations are protected.
- Our workloads will be decreased to ensure that we are not expected to do in 32 hours what we usually do in 40 hours.
- During our furlough weeks, any time spent working over 40 hours will be overtime.
- Open shifts will be offered to those of us on furlough before filling with an agency nurse.
- We will continue to accrue sick and vacation leave at our normal rate even in our furlough weeks.
- Our retirement and healthcare is protected during the furlough periods.

Because we met the timeline and completed this negotiation, all members who furlough will earn the extra \$600/week in Unemployment Insurance provided by the CARES Act through July 25th, 2020. All agencies will applyi ASAP for the shared work program to ensure eligibility for unemployment with any loss of 10%-50% of hours without having to meet the usual work requirements or waiting periods to collect unemployment.

It is possible to apply for an exemption to the furloughs if we feel that client or patient safety will be compromised by our absences due to furloughs.



"This MOU is the reason why it is important to maintain union membership. Without SEIU and our strong member leaders in all agencies, the state would have been able to furlough anyone they chose and possibly put resident and client safety at risk, as well as the safety of our members and coworkers. That's why each of us needs to join and become a dues-paying member of our union. We are stronger when we are all united in our union."

**Traci McKenzie, RN3, Lakeland Village,
SEIU 1199NW Executive Board**



"I have already heard from my coworkers that removing the weekly furloughs in July relieves a lot of stress that people were feeling about the economic impacts of losing four shifts of pay in a one-month

period. Being a member of a bargaining team for the first time and seeing these wins really made me feel how strong we are as members of SEIU when we are united. For the last decade, management has railroaded the members at Western State Hospital to get what they want. We need to continue to support each other. Changes are still coming. Now is the time for our members to be united and support all of us."

Dara Bernal, RN3, WSH

Not a member?

Or have a coworker that needs to sign a membership card?

Use the link <https://joinseiu1199nw.org> to sign or help someone sign a membership card. Members in good standing are eligible to vote on contract ratification, bargaining team selection, Executive Board and leadership, and solidarity actions.

Our resources for more information

Our union website has answers to many questions that may arise at <https://seiu1199nw.org>. Just click on the red banner for information on our union's COVID-19 response.

You can find the DSHS/DOH specific FAQs here:

<https://1199nwcovidresponse.org/furlough-faq/>

You can read our new furlough MOU here:

<https://1199nwcovidresponse.org/our-union-enters-into-memorandum-of-understanding-with-dshs/>

Eligible for Unemployment Insurance?

Helpful tips to get your payments

Some of our coworkers who have had Unemployment Insurance claims accepted after a furlough or hours reduction have not received unemployment payments.

During the COVID-19 crisis, our Union legal team can help with Unemployment Insurance issues.

If we have not received our Unemployment Insurance payments after successfully applying, we can send an email to COVIDLegalAid@seiu1199nw.org with our name, employer and our preferred phone number, and our union legal team will be in touch.

The 1199NW legal team can also help us if our Unemployment Insurance claims are denied. Email COVIDLegalAid@seiu1199nw.org for assistance.