

Defending Our Contract: Fighting for Credit of Our Low Census Hours

Recently, we discovered that EvergreenHealth Monroe was not recognizing low census time as hours of employment for RNs and LPNs, despite clear language in our contract stating that management is obligated to do so. Not counting low census time as hours worked can have a wide ranging impact, such as:

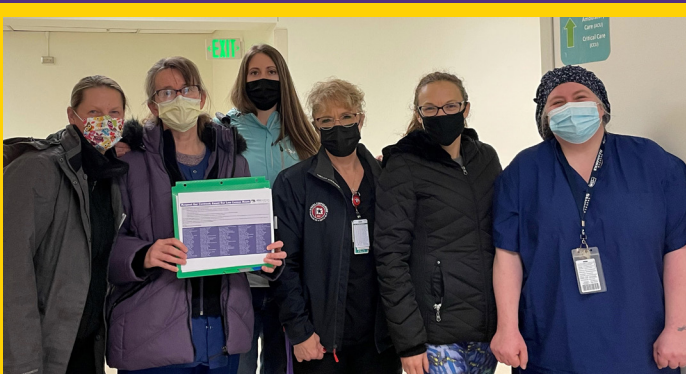
- Receiving our step increases later than we should have, resulting in losing pay we're owed.
- Loss of seniority hours, which impacts our job bidding and options in layoff or re-structure.
- Loss of sick time accrual.
- Potentially being denied FMLA that we qualified for because the hospital stated we had too few hours to qualify.
- Other impacts to contractual items dependent on low census hours being counted.



Using Our Collective Voice to Fight Back

While we have been fighting for credit for low census hours in grievance meetings with HR, we understand that direct action is an important tool for us and our coworkers. That's why RN and LPN union members created and circulated a petition calling on hospital management to immediately settle our grievance, to give credit for low census hours and to make us and our coworkers financially whole for any delayed step increases. ***With the signatures of 70 percent of the RNs and LPNs at Monroe, we delivered our petition on Feb. 22 to Stacey Riden, Lisa LaPlante and the EvergreenHealth Monroe Board of Commissioners.***

Through this incredible display of unity, we hope to send a clear message to hospital administration: **Union nurses will not back down until the hospital respects our contract!**



Members from MSTU and Periop Services delivering our petition to Monroe management.

Continuing Our Fight

While our actions and solidarity have clearly shown our union strength, hospital administration is still refusing to do the right thing and settle our grievance. On March 4, Monroe Chief Administrative Officer, Lisa LaPlante, told our union that Monroe would not be settling the grievance. Instead, the hospital has decided to spend tens of thousands of dollars in arbitration and legal fees to continue fighting us and preventing RNs and LPNs from getting what we are owed.

Although this is not the outcome we wished for, through our collective actions, we have shown hospital administration that we will not stop fighting for credit for low census time. Now more than ever, as we prepare to bring our case to arbitration, it is critical for us to continue using direct, collective actions to show our strength and unity to EvergreenHealth Monroe administration.

If you're looking to get involved, contact your union delegate or department leader for more information on our next steps!



“EvergreenHealth Monroe administration has clearly broken our contract and instead of making things right, they keep denying this grievance. How can a facility that prides itself on providing excellent healthcare for our community cheat its valuable nurses of what they’re owed? As this fight drags on, trust in our leadership continues to erode. For many of us, it is already a struggle to deal with fluctuating paychecks due to low census—dishonoring our contract and not counting this time towards seniority, step increases and FMLA applications only adds insult to injury. However, I am confident that as we stand together in unity, we will prevail.”

Martina Coleman RN, PACU

“This blatant disregard for our contract from HR is disturbing. What will be next? We need to show HR that we will unite and fight to get what we worked hard for!”

Nancy Anderson RN, MSTU



“If we allow HR to get away with a violation as large as this, it would open up Pandora’s Box and give them the confidence to ignore other parts of our contract in the future. We must let them know that we will not stand for this! We will stand together as a union and win this fight.”

Elena Swanger RN, MSTU

Strength Through Unity: Are You a Member of Our Union?

As working people, we know that we have strength when we stick together and use our collective voice to improve our pay, benefits and working conditions. We recognize the importance of preserving and building on our union’s strength to ensure that we continue to have the leverage necessary to bargain strong contracts! The most effective way to build our power is to make sure that all of us are members of our union at Monroe.

It’s simple: The more of us that are standing together with one strong, united voice, the more powerful we’ll be at the bargaining table.

If you haven’t become a member of our union yet,
use this link to sign up: joinseiu1199nw.org