

Safety Cannot Wait

As Registered Nurses in DSHS/DOH/DCYF, we play essential roles in making sure our Washington state communities and our families are safe, but we are experiencing alarming difficulties retaining and recruiting staff to work at our agencies and facilities. That is why we have demanded that the state bargains with us to win the raises we deserve and ensure we don't get further behind. To win wages that recruit and retain, we all need to show our unity to management.

Across the state of Washington, hospitals, clinics, healthcare facilities, and agencies are offering unprecedented sign-on bonuses and wage increases in order to recruit nurses and fill staffing shortages. We cannot afford to lose more coworkers to other facilities.

“We need to raise wages now to remain competitive with community standards. If we don't increase the amount experienced nurses are making, we run the risk of highly skilled nurses leaving

and taking their skills to other organizations. Also, as we are painfully aware, the cost of gas and food has increased astronomically. Additionally, if these nurses leave, it places the department at a disadvantage when we are unable to meet the needs of the vulnerable population we serve. My fellow nurses — I'm hoping you all will join me in signing the petition for a wage increase. We are stronger together.”

Sharon Miller Stephens, RN BSN, RCS



We are calling on the state for competitive wages and solutions to the Staffing Crisis NOW.

Our bargaining team is looking at dates to meet with management. We need everyone's support to send a strong message to management — that we are all committed to fight for solutions to address this crisis.

If you have not signed our petition, access it here: <https://1199nw.org/3maEZEw> or scan this QR code with your phone camera



The Vaccine Mandate

Because we have a union, we have a voice in how the vaccine mandate impacts us.

On August 9, the state of Washington made it mandatory for all healthcare workers to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19. As healthcare workers, we agree that the COVID vaccines are safe, effective, and the best way to protect ourselves and our families from COVID-19. But as members of a union, we know that we have the right to bargain any changes to our jobs. We have had an initial meeting with management, as we bargain the impacts of the vaccine mandate at each of our work locations we will use the following values to guide us in those conversations.



Our Values as a Union

- Every worker deserves a safe workplace.
- As union members, we have the right to bargain this change in working conditions.
- We trust science and understand that the vaccine is an important component to getting the pandemic under control.
- We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Vaccine information and access must be made available in workers' preferred languages. No worker will be made to wear a sticker or button that shows vaccination status.
- While vaccines are incredibly effective, they do not replace adequate and safe PPE and safe ventilation in our workplaces.
- Getting the vaccine must be as accessible as possible, including offering them on work time and paid time off for side effects.
- Employers must maintain safe staffing levels by doing everything in their power to staff to patient census while minimizing use of mandatory overtime: offering overtime, incentive shifts, referral and hiring bonuses, and utilizing travelers and agency workers.



“The governor’s vaccine mandate is a necessary step in providing life-saving protections for our patients, our families, and each other. The efficacy of existing and authorized vaccines for COVID-19 are well established and safe. This does not, however, absolve state employers from bargaining with SEIU on this change in working conditions. As we move forward with this step to protect our workforce and safe staffing levels, the vaccines must be made available to all employees in a way that is equitable, fair, and with little burden to union members. Further, the state should maintain staffing levels and it should offer competitive wages and retention bonuses in the marketplace.”

Onnika Merkle, RN3, 3S1 ESH

Important dates to be fully vaccinated by October 18

Vaccine	Series dose requirement	First dose no later than	Second dose
Pfizer	2 doses, 21 days apart	09/13/21	10/04/21
Moderna	2 doses, 28 days apart	09/06/21	10/04/21
Janssen/J&J	Single dose	10/04/21	N/A

Our State Pension Benefits are Secure!



You may have seen recent communication about the contribution rate for our state employee pension. As state employees we’ve fought hard to fund and protect our pensions in bargaining, political and legislative fights. Our pensions are secure.

We have worked to ensure that the elected officials who control decisions in Olympia value public service and retirement security and they know their job is to stand with us on protecting pension investments on behalf of the public unlike other states where pension security is at risk.

The notice we received was about a reduction in rates, *not* in benefits. Our benefits are fully intact. The contribution rate reduction is related to the higher return on investment our pension fund has received over the last year. Having a strong union at our workplace means that our healthcare and retirement are secure so we can focus on fighting for wages, staffing and racial justice.

Are you a member of our union at DSHS?

One way to make sure DSHS DOH remains a great place to work and to keep our union strong is by joining your coworkers and becoming a member. You can join SEIU Healthcare 1199NW by filling out an electronic card!

joinseiu1199nw.org



scan this QR code with your phone camera to become a member!

