

## **We need raises, benefits and a union contract that respect us and our work**

**Working at a small, rural hospital does not mean we are worth less**

Our nurses and service workers have been the foundation of patient care in our community and in our hospital. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we showed up to work in person and every day because we take great pride in our jobs, and appreciate our co-workers, and our commitment to our families and neighbors. Despite the odds during these challenging times, we want to continue caring for our patients and provide our best care.

This week at union bargaining, we finished presenting our proposals for improvements to our pay, benefits, and voice at our hospital. Management also presented their proposals and priorities for our bargaining. The difference between our vision of our hospital and management's vision could not be more clear.

### **Our vision: What we're proposing**

We are proposing significant raises to value our work and keep up with area hospitals, secure benefits, and investment in the people who make the hospital run—through training and education, respect for our union, an increased voice in safety, and other areas.

### **What management is proposing**

Management is proposing tiny raises that don't even add up to the inflation we have faced in 2022 over the length of a 3-year contract. They also want big takeaways to our healthcare protections and the right to make big changes to our jobs and employment with fewer protections for us.

Management's proposal is insulting to those of us who worked in person, on site day in and day out through the pandemic, who have signed up for dozens of extra shifts to staff our units, service workers who could take multi-dollar/hour raises to leave for various service industry or retail jobs where lives are not at stake, or RNs who could get five-figure bonuses to take jobs at other hospitals, to stay working here in Monroe. It is insulting to our families and community of patients who count on us to care for them.

### **We deserve better, and we will not stand for takeaways that move us backward!**

Talk to your bargaining team member to sign our unity petition and discuss our next steps. We need to stay united for the contract we and our community deserve and take whatever action it takes. **Our next bargaining date is November 9.**



"This year our current cost of living went up to 8.7 percent. Management's proposal of 2 percent is not even 25 percent of the increased cost of living due to inflation. I just find that very discouraging. We provide valuable services to all members of our community and sometimes it happens to be a very underserved community. Whether we're a large hospital or a small rural hospital, we perform the same duties that anybody else does in other hospitals and I think we need to be paid as such." - **Nancy Anderson, RN, Detox/Rehab**

"If someone does a medical procedure like an appendectomy at our hospital, the reimbursement rate that the organization gets from the insurance is similar to the amount of money as if you had it done at Swedish. Insurance rates don't drop just because we have a smaller hospital, and we don't charge the insurance less money. What we're asking for is not excessive, it is the norm in our industry, and management doesn't seem to care." - **Laura Ann Lacasse Steere, RN, Recovery Room**



**Our EvergreenHealth Monroe: Proposals that respect us, protect us, and pay us**

**Management's EvergreenHealth Monroe: Proposals convey extreme disrespect and disregard for our contributions and our lives**

**Substantial pay increases**

9/1/22 – 20% increase, with a minimum increase of \$3.25/hour for every coworker

9/1/23 – 15% increase, with a minimum increase of \$3.00/hour

*These are big increases. We believe we deserve them. As an example, our RNs are about **10% behind** the nurses at Evergreen Kirkland in pay right now, not counting their future raises. We are also 5-10% behind the nurses at Swedish already, and these folks just won **21.5%** increases over the next couple of years. Service workers like ED Techs and Cooks are as much as **10-20% behind** workers at Swedish hospitals, who are getting a minimum **\$6.50/hour** increase between now and October 2024.*

Additional pay improvements that are in line with most other union contracts in the state:

- \* Full credit for all experience in our wage scale placement
- \* Anniversary raises every year rather than after a certain number of hours,
- \* Higher and more equitable differentials and premiums
- \* More steps on our pay scales

**Secure, respectful benefits**

Continue “maintenance of benefits” for our healthcare plan, and ensure our premiums to insure our family members don’t go up more than 5% in a given year.

**Bring our retirement plan up to a reasonable standard** – employer contributions made to our account every pay period, as soon as we are benefit-eligible, so we earn the interest and we don’t have to jump through hoops to sign up and wait 10 months into the following year to get our money.

**Valuing us, our identities, and our potential**

Increased training and education benefits for all – including both CE benefits for RNs and tuition assistance benefits for all coworkers through the SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Training Fund.

Protections and inclusion for all of our identities.

Recognition and respect for our union through more inclusive union participation in new employee orientation.

Safe rest between shifts after being called in overnight in the OR.

**Minimal pay raises that mean, with inflation, the value of our pay will be less at the end of our contract than it is now**

Ratification – 2% increase

9/1/23 – 2% increase for service workers, or 3% increase for nurses

9/1/24 – 2% increase

*The lowest pay in our contract right now, for coworkers on Base Step as Environmental Services Techs and Diet Aides, is \$16.64/hour. Come January, this will be less than \$1/hour higher than the minimum wage for the entire state of Washington. A 2% increase for our lowest-paid coworkers equates to \$0.33/hour, or \$692 over a whole year if someone is full-time. We told management this is unconscionable.*

A couple of small increases on differentials, but no response to the vast majority of these proposals

**Blank check for management to change our healthcare**

Starting in 2024 (the first year they have the right to change it), an immediate, significant increase to the cost we pay to cover dependents. Also, starting then, management can change our healthcare benefits for any reason with only 45-days’ notice, including to plans where we’d have to start paying for coverage just for an employee only.

**No response** to fix the unacceptable problems with management’s approach to our retirement benefits. They are “looking into it.”

**Taking away our security and voice**

Management made multiple proposals that take away our job security and protections. Here are a few (not all):

We currently have Successorship protection (meaning our union contract is honored if the hospital merges, affiliates, etc). Management proposes it no longer applies if there is further Evergreen system affiliation or integration.

We currently have a right to severance pay if management lays us off. Management proposed that severance pay would not apply if we were offered any job through affiliation/integration or to any subcontractor management chose to work with.

Management wants to eliminate their commitment that they have no current plan to contract out our work (including “integration”). They want to shorten the notice from 180 to 60 days and limit our time to bargain about it.

Even while management wants to eliminate the notice they have to give us if they change or eliminate our jobs, they want us to give increased notice if we are the ones to resign from our jobs—increased to 21 days for service workers and 28 days for RNs.

**Now is the time to join together as a union for the contract we need**

We are becoming members of our union if we haven’t had a chance to join. Use this online form or join with a bargaining team member. Being members of our union is the most important way we show Evergreen management that we are standing together for raises, retention, and the contract we need.



[joinseiu1199nw.org](http://joinseiu1199nw.org)