



A Legacy of Unity, Strength, and Workplace Standards at Providence Swedish

Over our 30-year history since we organized as Swedish workers under the SEIU Healthcare 1199NW banner, we’ve faced many challenges, but because of our unity, resources, and strength as a union, we’ve continuously raised standards in our workplaces through every contract we’ve won. The historic wages and benefits we have in place today are possible because we’ve stood with each other and with Providence workers across the state to better support our patients, our families, and our communities.

Investing in our members and strength as a union is the only way to continue to take on multi-million-dollar corporations like Providence and the healthcare executives who run them, to keep standards high, and to ensure we’re a union where every member belongs and thrives.

Our story of union strength

Every time we have sat across Providence Swedish executives at the bargaining table, we have been prepared to take unified action to win what we and our patients deserve. In 2020, our solidarity and strength as a union was in full display with our biggest action ever — a three-day strike for patient care.

Then, in an unprecedented move, Providence requested an economic reopener of our contract in 2022, showing that we can move management to do the right thing when we take action together and have the resources we need to do so. The historic wages and benefits we won in 2022 were a direct result of the power we share together. By doing in-depth work on our shared Racial Justice analysis with Providence Swedish administration, we all came to the table using the same lens. That partnership led to a transformative agreement.

Even during years when we are not bargaining, whether in times of change, or while working to improve standards on our day-to-day operations, we know that taking action and standing together is the key to wages that recruit and retain, safer staffing, great benefits, protections, and a voice in our workplace.

| Registered Nurses | NAC | EVS Tech |
|---|---|--|
| 60% increase in wages  | 56% increase in wages  | 58% increase in wages. Our top step went from \$14 to \$33!  |



The union difference at Swedish

Wages

- ✓ We won big wage increases in 2022 in the form of either dollar amounts or percentages, whichever was higher, to address equity in our wage scales.
- ✓ Providence Swedish was the first chapter in our union to win a \$15 minimum wage, helping to build momentum statewide.
- ✓ For many of us, these wage increases represent a life-changing difference that marked a turning point from working multiple jobs to make ends meet, to working one job.
- ✓ Our wages have reliably and steadily grown since 2003 (see chart above.)

“When I became an 1199NW member, I started to get actual raises. With our previous union, the nurses were getting percentage raises, and we as nursing assistants were only getting \$500 to \$1,000 per year split into two payments, not even an actual raise.

After we joined 1199NW, my organizers were visible and accessible. I have protections, not only for my job, but for my health, through benefits like affordable insurance. Our employer wanted service workers to pay 50% of our insurance; the nurses we worked next to got it for free. It took a lot of action to move management to change their minds.



Our strength as a union comes true when it’s not just service workers fighting against management, but all of us combined, with nurses and techs standing with each other to increase the overall strength and use our voices, so we are not standing alone on an island. It is harder to take someone out when everyone’s standing together.” **Sheron Ray, NAC, Cherry Hill**

▶▶▶ The union difference at Swedish

Benefits

- ✓ Our PPO medical plan is the best medical benefit in the entire Providence system because we designed it at Swedish.
- ✓ We have the standard of maintenance of benefits language, which mean Providence can't change them.

Safe staffing for safe care

- ✓ All of our staffing plans were improved or maintained for 2024.
- ✓ Our staffing committees give us a voice in determining our staffing standards. We fought to win and will continue to expand and extend our incentive shift program.
- ✓ Our ongoing break relief pilot program will show that patients are safer when dedicated staff are on the schedule to make sure we get our breaks.

Upholding our contract standards

- ✓ Credit for past experience.
- ✓ Access to protective equipment during the COVID emergency.
- ✓ Paid time for union work and access to membership data.

Our Training Fund and continuing education opportunities

- ✓ The Training Fund helps us advance our careers in healthcare through tuition assistance, case management support, and more.
- ✓ We designed a special ACET certification for EVS expertise.

Creating a place where we all belong

- ✓ Spearheaded a nation-leading OEI committee.
- ✓ EVS workers fought for all workers to be able to take breaks in any break room and won home area assignments.

"Having a strong union has allowed me to have better working conditions, fair wages, affordable healthcare insurance, bargaining power, and a voice. Before COVID came knocking on our doors and threatened the safety of our own communities, we at Swedish overwhelmingly voted "yes" to go out on a three-day strike to fight for a fair contract and safe staffing. It was a sea of purple, and you heard our thunder as we walked the city blocks. After the three-day strike, we stood with each other to walk back into the hospitals.

After taking care of our communities through a pandemic, administration came to us to reopen our contract and bargain economics early. Using an equity lens, we stood together and three months later we won the highest wage increase across our state.

We must stand together and continue to fight for our patients and each other because they matter, and you matter! We have endured difficult times and the pandemic showed us how resilient we are. I am proud to walk with all of you and to continue to ensure that our union is strong and successful for many years to come. Our future depends on it." - **Carol Lightle, RN, Issaquah**



"I started at SMC in 1987, in a position within the Service bargaining unit, which was represented at that time by a SEIU Local 6 which represented a variety of service workers. I completed my nursing degree in 2004 and transferred into the nursing bargaining unit. I was aware of the Swedish RNs successful campaign to join 1199NW and admired the power the 1199 nurses wielded thru their union – with the big GHC strike and later the picketing SMC.

When I started at SMC in 1987, nurses, techs, and service workers weren't united, and we bargained separately. That changed during our merger with 1199NW and we all became one union. The contract expirations were aligned, we were able to bargain all the contracts together and we now receive the same benefits whether we are RN, RT, Sterile Processing, etc. With each new contract, there are improvements in access and equity.

This choice to bargain all the contracts together has brought us to the place we are now - with new contractual rights and a robust Training Fund. I have many co-workers that have utilized this benefit.

We would not be here now as nurses, service workers, tech workers, pharmacists, social workers – with the benefits, wages, contractual rights that we have now if our bargaining units were bargaining individually. For me that is the SEIU 1199NW difference." - **Linda Arkava, RN, Cherry Hill**



"Almost 26 years ago I came to Swedish and a member of SEIU 1199NW. Though I joined what I felt was safety for me and my job, I didn't feel included. The organizers didn't look like me, and there wasn't any fairness and equality. Unfortunately, fairness and equality were not really a thing for POC and we were targeted for discipline.

Our OEI is a committee that helped change that. I'm included now, we have competitive salaries, more representation that looks like the community, and committees to help keep upper management accountable to their actions. We have fought for recognition of experience including pay raises along with it. We fought for an uninterrupted meal break for all. EVS has more say and power in their job which was not there before at all.

More and more departments want to unionize since seeing what we won. Being under the same union umbrella leaves no one behind. All this is why I stand here today and say the fight continues but now our stand is not only firm but ROBUST!" - **Valarie Howard, CNA, eICU**

