

Bargaining Update – December 7, 2017

Following the nursing union vote on August 9 and 10 of this year, the first bargaining session between Munson Medical Center and the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) union was held today, Thursday, December 7, 2017. The bargaining session was held from 9:30 am – 1:10 pm at the Traverse City Library. The following topics were discussed:

No contract bargaining proposal

The union did not come prepared with a contract proposal today as we expected. The union suggested it would try to have one by January. We were disappointed with that delay. The union suggested we consider a process that can add to negotiation time called “interest-based” bargaining. We indicated that we could not evaluate whether that made sense without a bargaining proposal from the union.

Times and locations for future bargaining sessions

We proposed that bargaining sessions be held offsite so that patient care remains the focus on the hospital campus:

- We often have conference space shortages, and do not want to tie up two rooms for two consecutive days, two days per month, and eight to ten hours each day.
- Many conference rooms are in or near patient care areas.
- Bargaining onsite can be a distraction for patients, caregivers, and negotiators.

We suggested we continue to meet offsite and expressed the willingness to split the cost of a conference room at a hotel or consider other neutral locations with appropriate facilities. The union did not want to share in any negotiation costs and will look for something free. We agreed to consider any proposals.

Release time and pay for nurses on the union bargaining team

The union requested that nurses on the bargaining team receive additional paid time off from the hospital for time spent at bargaining sessions. We agreed to allow nurses time away from patient care for bargaining meetings and proposed several options to make that work:

- We suggested each side pay their own committees. The union does not plan to compensate nurses when they bargain for the union.
- We offered to allow nurses to use the self-scheduling system to schedule their shifts on non-bargaining days, to trade shifts with other nurses, or work vacant shifts to fill all of their hours. We also agreed to consider requests from nurses to use PTO time for missed shifts.
- We also agreed that nurses involved in collective bargaining do not need to work shifts within nine hours before and after planned collective bargaining times; this is important for the safety of those nurses and to ensure safe care for our patients.
- We believe it is unfair to give bargaining unit representatives more paid time off from their duties than other nurses and force other nurses to cover all of their missed shifts.

Interim grievance and arbitration process

The union presented a proposal for an interim grievance and arbitration process while we negotiate. The hospital agreed to review the proposal, but we remain focused on negotiating and reaching an overall agreement, not on short term agreements.

Union representative unrestricted access to the hospital for meetings and other union activities

The union requested unrestricted access to the hospital for a minimum of three non-nurse MNA representatives at all times. The union wanted this access in order to hold meetings at various places on site. We proposed that meetings take place off site and that other access requests be handled on a case-by-case basis, based on need. We remain committed to ensuring our Health Care Team can remain focused on providing care and that we meet our obligation to provide an environment of healing for our patients.

Collective bargaining will resume in 2018 and includes the following dates:

January 10

January 29 and 30

Feb 15 and 16

Feb 27 and 28

March 14 and 15

March 28

Munson Medical Center bargaining team:

Carol Baker, MSN, RN, OCN

Max Hunter, MSN, RN, CAPA

Jen Standfest, MSN, RN

Tami Putney, MSN, RN

Jeff Rose, HR Director

Ken Sparks, attorney representing Munson Medical Center

Union bargaining team:

Carolyn Moss, RN

Dagmar Cunningham, RN

Anthony Peltier, RN

Aimee Simerson, RN

Cindy Rydahl, RN

Jason Judd, RN

James Walker, RN

Elizabeth Biedenbach, RN

Ben Curl, MNA Business Representative

Branden Gemzer, MNA Business Representative

John Karebian, MNA Executive Director

In preparation for negotiations, the union made a request to Munson Medical Center on October 17, 2017 to provide data about all bargaining unit members, including private information such as each nurse's earnings and worked hours for the past three years, health insurance coverage for dependents, information about those who may have been injured at work, including their treatment, benefits elections and use of paid time off. By law, we were obligated to provide the information to the union. We requested the union agree in writing to keep your information confidential and use it only for bargaining purposes. The union refused to agree to that proposal.