

Bargaining Update – May 10 - 11, 2018

The ninth set of bargaining sessions between Munson Medical Center (MMC) and the MNA occurred on Thursday, May 10, 2018 from 1:40 to 5:00 pm and on Friday, May 11, 2018 from 11:00 am to 6:30 pm.

Most importantly, we completed the negotiation process over Open Enrollment so that represented MMC Nurses can enroll for next year. After two bargaining sessions, the union accepted the same benefits package that all other eligible Munson Healthcare employees are being offered for the benefit year beginning July 1, 2018. We are pleased that nurses can now join other employees and begin the process of open enrollment. We are pleased that nurses represented in the bargaining unit will be able to participate in the same, improved benefits package as the rest of our employees across Munson Healthcare.

We reached three other interim agreements that will go into effect now, before an overall agreement is reached:

Staffing Services

The union agreed that it will not oppose MMC's use of Munson Healthcare Staffing Services contract RNs to fill temporary, multi-week vacancies in certain situations. The agreement also outlines how MMC and Munson Healthcare Staffing Services nurses will pick up extra shifts and volunteer for low census/hospital request days.

Remote Patient Monitoring

Last year MMC began studying ways to use remote patient monitoring to prevent falls and otherwise enhance patient safety in appropriate cases. While safety companions will continue for certain patients, remote monitoring offers an additional option for ensuring patient safety. The union agreed MMC should continue its planned rollout, including the continued involvement of nurses in making decisions regarding this patient care intervention. We are pleased that the union has agreed to the hospital's continued investment in patient safety and doing what is best for our patients. Thanks as well to those nurses who have been working on the clinical details of this rollout for many months.

Annual Discussions

MMC agreed to remove one question in the annual discussion document related to responding to change. MMC respects the professional practice of nursing and the legal right of all employees to express their views regarding changes that impact them and their patients whether positive or negative. We will put out an additional communication on this issue in the near future.

The union and MMC also continued bargaining toward the terms that will be included in a collective bargaining agreement once an overall agreement is reached. These will not go into effect immediately, but will be part of a final agreement.

Grievance and Arbitration

We made progress and reached a partial agreement on some of the principles of grievance and arbitration. It provides that the grievance and arbitration process will cover disciplinary decisions as well as other contract disputes and that the union (using dues paid by nurses) and MMC will each pay half the cost when issues are arbitrated. Every effort will be made to schedule grievance meetings at times when nurses involved are not scheduled to work to ensure that nurses can remain on their units to care for patients and others are not left short-handed.

Non-Discrimination

Both the union and MMC expressed commitments to non-discrimination in the workplace. MMC had hoped the union would expand this commitment by agreeing not to discriminate with respect to service on MMC committees and otherwise on the basis of union support or dues paying status, but the union would not make that commitment. MMC will continue to fight for language ensuring that that all nurses are respected, regardless of their union support or payment of dues.

Alternate Work Arrangements

Both parties agreed to language allowing MMC to continue approving alternate work arrangements after the contract is signed and ensuring that there will be an orderly process if existing alternate work arrangements are considered for change.

Health and Safety

The union and MMC agreed that as part of a contract, MMC will continue to follow health and safety laws and continue to provide appropriate personal protective equipment just as we do now.

MMC will continue to bargain in good faith for a contract covering nurses that is focused on what is best for both patients and our entire Health Care Team.

The next set of collective bargaining sessions will be on May 29 and 30.