

**SPECIAL UPDATE:  
PECSH GRIEVES EMPLOYER HEALTHCARE  
PLAN ON LAST DAY OF CONTRACT: CONTINUES  
TO WAIT FOR REQUESTED INFORMATION**

On Monday, the final day of the contract PECSH filed a grievance raising concerns that the Hospital has not complied with the contract in its administration of self-funded employee healthcare plans. The Hospital recently explained in a presentation to the bargaining team that when employees received medical services at a Sparrow facility the Hospital wrote the cost off, but billed the employee and set our portion of the health insurance premiums based on elevated rates. The presentation also raised a number of other concerns about the compliance of the administration of the plan to our contract. As the grievance process continues updates will be forthcoming. In related news:

- The Hospital has also refused or delayed disclosure of information which is needed for PECSH to bargain over employee healthcare. We have requested information to understand the plan in order to understand the employer's representations about increased costs and potential issues with the healthcare plan's administration.
- This information includes premium calculations, contracts with PHP, the Sparrow Health System owned administrator of the self-funded plans, and lists of the costs for medical services that the Hospital used to set employee premiums.
- **Over ten requests for information remain unfilled.** Some of the requests have been outstanding since June of this year. The Union is continuing to pursue this information through an open unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board.
- **The Hospital's continued refusal and delay in providing this information will continue to obstruct progress in negotiations.**

**PATIENTS COME FIRST IN FINAL PROPOSALS BEFORE  
CONTRACT EXPIRATION**

Our bargaining surveys have shown that above all things nurses and healthcare professionals have a strong desire to protect the patients we serve. Last week we put patients first by proposing to strengthen our staffing numbers, guarantee patient safety sitters for patients in

need, and regulating variable shifts. On Monday, we continued to put patients first with two more proposals that protected members and patients alike:

**Proposal 1: Guaranteeing Medical Financial Assistance for Members and Patients Who Are Unable to Afford It**

On Monday we proposed that the Hospital guarantee its financial assistance policy available to patients and members. The Hospital currently maintains a financial assistance policy that provides free necessary medical services to any member or patient below 200% of the poverty level and discounted services to members and patients below 300% of the poverty level. The Hospital is required to put forth a financial assistance policy as part of its obligation as a non-profit organization, however, it is not required to maintain any specific level of benefits in that policy. During the term of the last contract the Hospital's spending on medical financial assistance declined significantly. As the Hospital is currently proposing significant budget cuts and significant cuts to our healthcare, guaranteeing this policy as part of our contract is increasingly important for us and our community. It also sends an important message to patients that we are their advocates at Sparrow Hospital.

**Proposal 2: Ending Reporting Medical Debt on Member and Patient Credit Reports**

On Monday we proposed that the Hospital stop reporting unpaid medical debt on member and patient credit reports. Despite working for a non-profit healthcare provider, one of the most common reasons our members have reached out for financial assistance in recent years is medical related expenses. It is important that we and patients not be unfairly punished in times of financial need. Recently the three largest credit reporting agencies enacted restrictions on reporting of medical debt on patient credit scores. Inaccuracies with reporting of medical debt on patient credit scores are common. There is also little interaction or verification required with a member or patient to let them know that they owe a bill before it is reported on their credit. The impact of a negative credit score impairs members and patients' ability to secure better housing for their families or reliable transportation to get to work. This proposal will protect members and patients from unfair punishment from debts they may not owe or cannot pay.

**Questions About the Contract Expiration?**

Don't be nervous about working with an expired contract. It is not uncommon for a contract to expire while negotiating. With few exceptions, the National Labor Relations Act requires that the employer maintain the existing terms and conditions of our current collective bargaining agreement until we reach a new agreement. That means our wages, PTO, benefits and other terms of the contract must continue to be followed by the employer even though the contract has expired.

If you have any questions about the contract negotiations, contact Jeff Breslin, PECSH President, at 517-364-5112 or [jeffrey.breslin@minurses.org](mailto:jeffrey.breslin@minurses.org).