

For those of you interested in more information, here is the first of many updates to come. Please keep in mind that your team is still away with families and more information will be released as it is completed.

How We Won the Fight for Increased Security in Our Workplace

We're going to begin a daily series going in depth on an important victory in our contract negotiation. Tonight's victory is how we won a tentative agreement on language guaranteeing a timely response from security and the implementation of a visitor management and identification system.

One of the most notable issues pointed out to our bargaining team from member surveys was the rising concern about the security of staff and patients on our hospital campus. Members told heart-breaking stories of how they had been assaulted in the workplace and had received little help during and after the assault. Our bargaining team made addressing these issues a top priority in negotiations.

At the bargaining table, the Hospital initially refused to make any concessions. Every chance we had we pointed out security and safety stories we and our members had experienced. One of our team shared a story with management where a visitor had brought in a large knife to a patient floor. Another shared a story where a nurse had found a visitor in the kitchen pantry at 3am who identified themselves as belonging to a room that was currently unoccupied.

In the late Fall the Hospital began to reluctantly agree to small proposals to improve security such as adding better lighting to parking lots and guaranteeing a security escort to the parking lot upon member requests. The Hospital even agreed to new language which prevented it from posting pictures of staff in public areas without their consent. Eventually the Hospital moved on to agreeing to language where it would assist and encourage a member to file a police report if they had been assaulted and provide free and unlimited counseling services through Cares.

There were still two large issues that remained unsettled. We had proposed language that there be a timely security response when a member (or patient) needed it and that the Hospital secure better control over the visitors entering the Hospital campus. Getting security guarantees like these in a union contract were almost unheard of. No other MNA contract had similar language, but with the rising assaults happening nationwide, we knew this was the time and place to get it.

After months of bargaining, in late November, the parties reached an agreement on language requiring a timely and adequate security response to member and patient reports of assaults, threats, or emergencies. This was a huge win, but it wasn't enough; we needed a more controlled, secured campus. In early December, we gave notice of our picket and it happened:

the employer agreed to language guaranteeing the implementation of a visitor identification and management system by the end of 2018. This system will likely mean visitor badges, controlled access to elevators and other important areas and better security for our patients and members. This was the security win we had been waiting and working so hard for and we earned it together!