

Nurses put the care in  healthcare

August 31, 2016

Nurses Reach Tentative Agreement with Essentia Health

After a long day of intense negotiations, your MNA bargaining team is happy to announce that we reached a tentative agreement with Essentia Health early in the morning of August 31.

We fought off many concessionary proposals from Essentia and negotiated significant improvements to our contract. We agreed to changes in our health insurance with offsets to wages, staffing, bonuses, shift differentials, and other advances.

Final changes we agreed to include:

- Staffing: Essentia agreed to the team's accelerated FTE creep proposal that allows nurses to permanently add to their FTEs, based on historical help need postings in their units. This will include the opportunity for nurses to add "variable" FTEs to their ranges. (For example .6 to .8). We believe this will reduce the number of help needs on each unit and improve staffing levels. This should also help less senior nurses who want more hours permanently built into their work agreements;
- Wage increases of 2 percent each year of the three-year contract;
- A \$300 bonus upon ratification;
- An additional \$300 bonus in July 2017;
- Nurses will retain Contract Plan C and their protection from any diminishment in benefits under this plan. Plan B will be eliminated in 2019 with improvements to other contract terms that offset this loss. These additional increases go into effect January 1, 2019, and include:
 - A \$500 increase to the maximum in each level of the longevity bonus in the current contract. These levels have remained the same for so long that most nurses who qualify for the bonus will receive the full \$500 increase;
 - For nurses with 15-19 years' experience, an increase from \$10 to \$50 in the calculation that determines the bonus;
 - An increase to \$2 per hour for the evening shift differential;
 - An increase to \$2.75 per hour for the night shift differential;
 - An increase to \$2.25 per hour for the straight evening differential;
 - An increase to \$3.25 for the straight night shift differential;
 - An increase to \$15 per hour for the extra weekend bonus;



- Nurses employed on Feb. 1, 2019, who will move from Plan B to Plan C or who have already moved to Plan C will receive a \$750 bonus;
- Nurses who are already on Plan C in 2016 will receive a \$375 bonus in Feb. 2017;
- We also agreed to a reasonable union access plan that does not require MNA staff to get approval to enter our hospitals.

We previously negotiated:

- Charge nurse pay: starting July 1, 2017, any nurse working in the charge nurse role will receive a differential of \$0.50 per hour;
- In addition to the \$0.50 per hour certification pay for one nationally recognized nursing certification, any nurse who has more than one will receive an additional \$250 bonus per year;
- Updates to layoff language;
- Creation of a workplace violence committee with nurse participation;
- Improving the orientation process;
- An attendance policy review process for LMC;
- Essentia will no longer require that CAPA certification be a job requirement for nurses and that any nurse who has this certification will receive the certification pay;
- Amend the FTE creep language to make it easier for nurses who pick up extra shifts to permanently increase their FTE.

Nurses will vote on the package on September 8 at two locations: the Incline Station in Duluth from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. and at the Superior Public Library from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Full details of the entire tentative agreement will be sent to all nurses before the vote and will also be available at the vote.

Your negotiating team is recommending a yes vote for ratification. We believe this agreement makes some major improvements to our contract that benefits every nurse and our patients.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support and solidarity of the nurses through our many activities including the informational picket, attending a City Council meeting, packing the room on the first day of negotiations, marching on the boss, and many more.