



INFORMATION FROM YOUR UNION: **CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR MNA MEMBERS**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Question: What happens if we cannot get a contract settlement?

Answer: The contracts between the metro Allina hospitals (Abbott Northwestern Hospital - Phillips Eye Institute, Mercy Hospital, United Hospital, and Unity Hospital) expire on May 31, 2016. Your MNA Negotiating Committee will continue to bargain for as long as the employer is willing to bargain to get an agreement, that could be into June or later.

Question: What should MNA members who are waiting to find out what will happen with the contract be doing now?

Answer: There are two really important things to do right now while we are bargaining a new contract. The first is to attend bargaining unit meetings, lunch-n-learns, participate in actions, wear red on negotiation days, and be part of the bargaining unit only Facebook group. Stay informed. The second most important is to save money for an emergency fund, just in case. This is a great idea even if there wasn't a contract being negotiated.

Question: Why would we go on strike?

Answer: We would go on strike if we were unable to reach an agreement with the employer and 66% of the members who voted rejected the employer's proposal.

Question: Is there going to be a strike?

Answer: We don't know. We will do everything we can to prevent a strike. If we cannot reach an agreement, a strike is our biggest weapon and we take this very seriously. It is up to you. Make your voice heard.

Question: Who can decide if there is a strike?

Answer: MNA Nurses decide if there is a strike. MNA policies require a two-thirds vote by MNA members in the bargaining unit who choose to vote.

Question: When could a strike begin?

Answer: If MNA Nurses authorize a strike, your MNA Negotiating Committee will decide the date that a strike will begin. This decision will be made at the point in negotiations when Allina Health and MNA cannot agree upon the terms of a contract and it appears no progress is being made. We are required by law to give a 10-day notice prior to striking.

Question: How long will a strike last?

Answer: That depends on the type of strike we wish to call. It could be a short-term strike with a defined start and end date. Or it could be an open-ended strike that would last until we reach an agreement with our employer that we can accept.

Question: Are we still protected by the provisions of our contract after it expires?

Answer: Everything remains in effect until we sign a new agreement except the no-strike, no lockout language is no longer in effect. The hospital may not be required to arbitrate grievances filed after June 1 (they will be dealt with in negotiations).

Question: What is a “lockout”?

Answer: A lockout of nurses is an action taken by an employer to prevent employees from working after a labor agreement expires. A lockout may be used by Allina Health as a result of reduced operations prior to or following a 10-day notice by our union and/or a subsequent strike.

Question: Can Allina Health lockout only a couple of nurses?

Answer: Allina Health can selectively keep some nurses from working based on the reduced need for nurses in a patient care area or department. If they have arranged for replacement nurses (who cost the hospital a lot more money and must be licensed), Allina Health may lockout some nurses for a period of time where they have contracted for replacements - or during a period of time where patient volumes remain low after a strike. We will negotiate a return to work agreement in the event of any lockout.

Question: Will I lose my job or have to re-bid on my current job?

Answer: As part of the negotiations, the return to work process will be negotiated by the MNA Negotiating Committee. There is a possibility that the employer could force a rebidding based on a reduced need for registered nurses following a work stoppage.

Question: Are all nurses in a struck hospital expected to withhold services during a strike?

Answer: Yes, all MNA Nurses employed by the involved hospital and who are part of the bargaining units represented by MNA are expected to withhold their services.

Question: What will happen to me if I cross the picket line?

Answer: MNA Bylaws provide that members, after due process, can be disciplined if charges are brought by other members for crossing the picket line. Such discipline may include reprimand, censure, suspension, expulsion from membership, or be assessed fines. More important than potential discipline, though, is the fact that you will have to work side by side with your peers who honored the picket line after the strike is over.

BENEFITS

Question: Would my health insurance continue during the strike?

Answer: Insurance continues following the first day of a month for nurses who are actively employed at the commencement of a strike. If we begin the strike after June 1, we would be covered for the month of June. If the strike were to go longer than that, federal law requires our employers to offer us and our dependents the option to continue coverage under any group health, dental, or life insurance plan, at our own expense. If we get to that point, we will provide everyone with details.

Question: Am I at risk for losing my pension if I strike?

Answer: No. Allina cannot alter your pension as a result of any strike, because the pension is not being negotiated.

Question: What happens to benefits for nurses who are on strike?

Answer: A strike is a “qualifying event” under Federal COBRA provisions that allow for the continuation of coverage provisions for health insurance benefits. Allina is required to send appropriate COBRA notices to striking employees and allow them to continue coverage by paying the entire premium cost and administrative fees (102% of full premium), as with all employees who access benefits through COBRA. Allina is also required to give notice of the right to continue life insurance as required by state law.

VACATION, SICK TIME AND PTO

Question: Can I request vacation/PTO during a strike?

Answer: Most likely all vacation/PTO would be denied and not paid during a strike.

Question: Can I save my PTO and use it during a strike to ensure I continue getting a paycheck?

Answer: No. If an employee is on strike status, he or she is not eligible to take vacation/PTO regardless of whether or not it was pre-approved.

Question: If a nurse gives birth or becomes ill after a strike commences, will Allina pay their sick leave?

Answer: No. An employee on strike will not be able to apply for contractual sick leave benefits during a strike. The nurse may be entitled to certain benefits provided by law (e.g. FMLA).

Question: Will Allina continue to pay sick leave to a nurse taking sick leave at the commencement of a strike?

Answer: A nurse on strike will receive sick leave benefits if the nurse is a qualified and eligible recipient of sick leave and on an approved Leave of Absence on the last date prior to a strike. When capable of returning to work, the nurse will be asked if he/she plans to return to work. If the answer is no, then his or her status will be changed to "on strike." Physician verification of illnesses that extend into a strike period may be required.

Question: If a nurse is on a Leave of Absence at the commencement of a strike, what will happen to his/her status?

Answer: A nurse on either a medical (including a disability leave) or personal leave of absence will be asked at the conclusion of his/her approved leave if they intend to return to work. If the employee refuses because of the strike and is physically able to work, his/her status will be changed from a medical or personal leave of absence to strike status.

Question: Will nurses who are currently receiving workers' compensation continue to receive it during a strike?

Answer: As long as the nurse does not go on strike, he or she will continue to receive wages through workers' compensation. It is recommended that individuals speak with their disability case manager for specific questions regarding your situation.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Question: Does MNA have a strike fund?

Answer: MNA does have strike funds to help meet the hardship needs of nurses. The strike fund cannot replace your income, however. It is a last resort when all other avenues have been explored. There are no automatic payments or stipends paid to striking nurses. Every individual with the right to strike has a personal obligation to be financially prepared for a strike. It is the responsibility of the membership to make appropriate plans and develop strategies to support themselves during a strike. In the event of a strike, applications for the strike fund will be made available to striking nurses.

Question: Am I eligible for unemployment while on strike?

Answer: Minnesota law indicates that striking employees are not entitled to collect unemployment compensation. However, employees who suffer a lockout may be eligible for unemployment compensation.

NURSES WORKING IN MULTIPLE HOSPITALS OR POSITIONS IN ALLINA HEALTH (MULTI-UNIT)

Question: What will be the work expectations of a current multi-unit nurse that holds an MNA position and a non-contract position?

Answer: The nurse will be considered "on strike" for their MNA position if they do participate in the strike. If the employee is needed in the non-MNA job only, he or she will be expected to report to work only if the work is done at a non-striking facility.

Question: Will striking MNA nurses that are multi-unit and also hold a non-contract job at a non-striking facility be allowed to increase their hours in their non-contract role?

Answer: These nurses can access additional hours in their non-contract role using the existing systems to indicate availability.

Question: Will a multi-unit nurse who works a non-contract role in a striking facility be able to work during a strike?

Answer: Yes, if the nurse chooses to do so. However, if the non-contract role is at a facility that is on

strike, the nurse is not required to report to work for that role. However, the nurse will be expected to report to their non-contract role if it is performed at a facility that is not on strike. (e.g., Allina Commons, hospital not affected by a strike.)

MNA Chairpersons

Abbott Northwestern/Phillips Eye Institute

Angela Becchetti, Jeanne Forman, Loellen Grzeskowiak
Chairpersons Office: (612) 863-8357 or (612) 863-8358

Mercy Hospital

Morganna Moon, LouAnn Uhr
Chairpersons Office: (763) 236-6895

United Hospital

Bunny Engeldorf Chairperson Office: (651) 241-8097
Barb Forshier Chairperson Office: (651) 241-6335

Unity Hospital

Gail Olson, Robin Larson
Chairpersons Office: (763) 236-6895

