Teams Exchange Additional Proposals

The bargaining team for Swedish Medical Center and Swedish Edmonds held a seventh “Main Table” bargaining session with SEIU 1199NW yesterday, during which the Swedish team presented new proposals related to subcontracting, wages for Case Management Social Workers, Maternal Medicine Social Workers and ARS counselors, and union leave. SEIU 1199NW presented testimonials and proposals related to retirement benefits, premium increases, employee transportation, incentive pay and rest between shifts.

**Subcontracting**

The Swedish bargaining team presented a proposal on subcontracting that would bring Swedish’s contracts more in line with many other health care providers. Swedish knows this is a contentious issue that could raise concern among caregivers and used the bargaining session to provide a detailed explanation of the proposed changes which are designed to provide caregivers many opportunities to continue their careers at Swedish if their position is ever impacted by a decision to subcontract. Opportunities include training and support to grow their careers, and the ability to take necessary time to get the training needed and return to Swedish with their seniority intact with preferential hiring considerations.

This proposal would enable Swedish to adapt to changes in the health care industry, evolve to meet patient needs and help the organization continue to be strong and sustainable. In a dynamic environment, Swedish may need to shift some of its areas of focus and partner with organizations that augment its core competencies. Swedish’s proposal values caregivers and shows that it is dedicated to those who want to grow within the organization, giving them support and training to advance their careers.
Swedish’s proposal comprises three key elements that underscore its deep commitment to caregivers. First, Swedish would provide any caregiver affected by subcontracting 120 days’ notice to help facilitate reassignment and identify another potential role within Swedish that the caregiver might move into. Swedish currently has 400 open positions, and it strongly desires keeping caregivers within the organization. This process would be facilitated through the existing change team process.

Second, under the proposal, any caregiver who applies for a different position at Swedish during an 18-month window would be treated as an internal candidate and retain his/her seniority within the organization.

Third, the Swedish bargaining team is open to exploring whether impacted caregivers could be allowed to access resources from the Training Fund to pay for training or additional skill development so they can apply for open positions within the organization.

Caregivers are the organization’s greatest resource, and Swedish is committed to growing from within. The bargaining team looks forward to continuing to discuss this important issue with the union.

Case Management Social Workers and Addiction Recovery Service Counselor Wages

The Swedish team proposed a wage scale for Case Management Social Workers, Maternal Medicine Social Workers and Addiction Recovery Service Counselors. Swedish has been engaged in bargaining with this group for its first contract. The wage proposal, which mirrors the Edmonds Case Management scale for the majority of the social workers, is an important step and the team is hopeful that this will bring us closer to resolution with these caregivers. The proposal ensures that no caregivers will be placed below their current rate on the new scale, and they will then move up on an annualized basis. The Swedish team’s previous proposal of a year-to-year wage increase – 2% upon ratification (not retroactive to contract expiration), 2% after the first year, 1.5% after the second year and an additional 1.5% after the third – would also still apply.
Union Leave

The Swedish team also submitted a proposal that updates the union’s leave language to enhance protections for confidential patient information and overall patient safety. Under the proposal, Swedish caregivers who are on leave from their regular employment with Swedish to perform union service are prevented from representing themselves as active Swedish caregivers during that time and must follow the already agreed upon language that applies to union employees who are accessing Swedish premises. This protects them and our patients from the possibility of inadvertent sharing of patient information.

Cleaning up the Contract

The Swedish contracts include many pages of additional information captured in “Letters of Understanding.” These materials are not clearly explained, in need of updating, jump from one topic to another and, in many cases, belong elsewhere in the contract. To help all caregivers better understand the rights and obligations created by the contract, the Swedish team made several recommended “housekeeping” updates to the Letters of Understanding. These changes would streamline the contract and ultimately make it a more clear and usable document for both Swedish and the union.

Union Presents Proposals

The union team presented several economic proposals in the bargaining session. First, SEIU 1199NW responded to the retirement benefits proposal Swedish presented on June 25 by proposing an increase and adjustment to the base and matching contributions from Swedish to caregivers’ 401ks. The union presented this proposal after a discussion and a series of testimonials regarding the importance of retirement benefits, and the challenges some caregivers face saving for retirement and paying off debt.

Additional economic proposals included that all Swedish employees be issued Orca passes to cover all transit, at no expense to the caregiver. Swedish currently contributes over $2 million to the Training Fund every year, and this proposal would double Swedish’s investment. The union proposed changes to how successive weekend premiums are paid, an increase in shift differential payments, and an increase in certification pay. SEIU 1199NW presented a proposal
to mandate incentive pay for extra shifts that caregivers pick up at either time-and-one-half or double-time depending on FTE.

SEIU 1199NW presented a proposal around work schedules, mandating a change to an 8-week work schedule, with posting 21 days in advance. The union also presented a proposal that unit-based staffing committees determine who creates work schedules, and whether to use seniority or a rotating method to create those schedules, and how rest between shift premiums is triggered.

The Swedish bargaining team is still receiving economic proposals from SEIU 1199NW and it’s unclear when the union will have its initial proposal completed. Once Swedish receives the full initial proposal, it will be able to evaluate and prioritize its responses.

**Bargaining Teams Update “Main-Table” Meeting Schedule**

The teams agreed on an updated schedule for “main table” bargaining sessions. The confirmed schedule going forward is:

- July 30
- August 13

**Keeping You Informed**

The Swedish bargaining team is here to answer your questions and discuss the issues you care about. Send questions by email to communications@swedish.org. Please also look to Labor Negotiation News for the latest updates after each bargaining session.

Please feel free to share this newsletter widely within your teams and with your providers.

**2019 Contract Negotiations Bargaining Team**

Below is a list of members of the Swedish bargaining team, with each member identified by the contract s/he represents:
• Jean Doerge, Chief Nursing Officer – Edmonds RN and Pro/Tech
• Jan Flom, Director Nursing Services – Edmonds RN and Pro/Tech
• Julie Norman, Senior Manager Guest Services Cafeteria – Edmonds Pro/Tech
• Rhose Hipolito, Nurse Manager Surgical Telemetry Cherry Hill – SMC RN and Service
• Wendy Connors, Manager Emergency Department Ballard – SMC RN and Service
• Brian Trickel, Chief Nursing Officer Issaquah/Redmond – SMC RN, Service and Tech
• Marci Mann, Director Nursing Services Acute Care First Hill – SMC RN and Service
• Erika Watkinson, Nurse Manager Gyn Surgical First Hill – SMC RN and Service
• Sheri Love, Director Periop Services First Hill – SMC RN, Tech and Service
• Denise Dollar, Manager Respiratory Care Pulmonary Function – SMC Tech and Edmonds Pro/Tech
• Candi Johnson, Director Systems Nutrition Services – SMC Service
• Larisa Cummings, Director Patient Access Services – SMC Service
• Doug Green, Interim Director Systems Environmental Services – SMC Service
• John Weir, Senior Manager Environmental Services Multi-Site – SMC Service
• Rose Van Wyk Coesens, Manager of the Breast Imaging Center Edmonds – Edmonds Pro/Tech
• Gwyn Anglin, Manager Medical Imaging Ballard – SMC Tech and Service
• Kristi Hester, Regional Senior Manager of Starbucks – SMC Service and EDM Pro/Tech
• Shelley Livingston, Labor Relations Director
• Melissa Norwood, HR Director
• Dan Mueller, VP Senior Labor/Employment Counsel
• John Hauge, VP Senior Labor/Employment Counsel

If you have feedback for the team on contract changes you would like to see, please reach out to your bargaining team representative.