First TA Reached; Swedish Proposes Federal Mediation to Spur Faster Progress

The bargaining team for Swedish Medical Center and Swedish Edmonds held a tenth “Main Table” bargaining session with SEIU 1199NW yesterday, during which the Swedish team and the union team reached their first tentative agreement (TA). The TA would add to the Edmonds contracts the same language regarding paycheck errors that is in the SMC contracts. The Swedish team had also hoped to reach tentative agreements in other areas but that was not achieved.

Given the slow rate of progress to date, the Swedish team proposed that the parties ask the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) to join the negotiations in the hope of spurring faster progress than can be achieved under normal bargaining conditions. FMCS, a federal agency that provides experienced mediators to assist labor and management in reaching agreements, was an integral part of the last bargaining process in 2015. Late in the evening, the union team agreed to reach out to FMCS to attempt to coordinate schedules for a future bargaining session. With or without the assistance of FMCS, the Swedish team remains committed to bargaining in good faith to reach an agreement.

As a neutral third-party agency, FMCS would provide structure to the bargaining process and help both parties identify a path forward. Mediation would help build a framework for the discussions we have had to this point and provides neutral, non-binding guidance toward an agreement. Mediation is a positive step in negotiations and
the Swedish bargaining team is hopeful that we will reach common ground with the union through this process. The parties are going to reach out to FMCS to discuss the path forward, and we will update you once the parties have connected with the Agency about next steps.

**Staffing Discussions Continue**

The union team also presented more details about its staffing proposals and stated that the Joint Nurse Staffing Committee and unit-based staffing committees should be suspended during bargaining. Swedish read to the union team a portion of a letter that had been sent to SEIU explaining Swedish’s position regarding the staffing committees:

… Section 17.3 of the RN contract between the Union and Swedish Medical Center and Section 19.2 of the RN contract between the Union and Swedish Edmonds, both titled Joint Labor Management Nursing Staffing Committee, set forth the agreed-upon structure for implementing the provisions of RCW 70.41.420 regarding nurse staffing committees. Sections 3(b) and (6), respectively, of that statute require the JNSC to engage in a semiannual review of the staffing plan against patient need and known evidence-based staffing information, and to produce the hospital’s annual nurse staffing plan.

Those requirements are ongoing. They apply regardless of the status of the parties’ contract negotiations. Swedish has every intention of continuing to comply with the statute and the joint process for implementation set forth in the RN contracts. We trust that the Union has the same intention.

The most recent staffing committee reviews were held in March, and it will soon be time for those committees to reconvene, as required by the state and by the terms of the contracts. The Swedish team explained that that process would continue and hopes staff will continue to participate in the process. Swedish team indicated that it would send the union written questions regarding the union’s proposals on staffing.
Keeping You Informed

We are here to answer your questions and discuss the issues you care about. We welcome your questions by email at communications@swedish.org. Please also look to Labor Negotiation News for the latest updates after each bargaining session.

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.