With Contracts Expiring, Teams Continue to Exchange Proposals

The bargaining team for Swedish Medical Center and Swedish Edmonds held an eighth bargaining session with SEIU 1199NW yesterday, during which the union team presented several new proposals and the Swedish team presented two new proposals. The Swedish team had presented all of its economics proposals during previous bargaining sessions and continues to wait for the union to present its remaining economic proposals.

All contracts for caregivers represented by SEIU 1199NW were previously scheduled to expire on June 30. The Swedish team offered a one-month extension until July 31, which the union accepted. That one-month extension has now ended. With contracts now expired, the Swedish bargaining team is still committed to bargaining in good faith with the union.

Training Fund

Swedish is the largest contributor to the Multi-Employer Training Fund, which supports caregivers’ professional development. It is administered by an executive director and staff in conjunction with SEIU 1199NW. Swedish contributes more than $4 million annually to the fund, which is accessible by Swedish caregivers, as well as caregivers at other participating hospitals. The Swedish bargaining team presented a proposal that would increase operational transparency by requiring the union to do the following:

- Assure the training fund reports certain information to Swedish on a quarterly basis, including a list of individuals paid by the training fund for services provided
- Assure the fund discloses any misuse of funds or any violations of fund principles within 15 days after discovery of such misuse or violation
• Have a third party conduct an annual audit of the fund and provide a detailed report of results to Swedish
• Respond within thirty days to a request from Swedish for information related to the fund’s administration and performance
• Assure the fund provides, at least quarterly, a list of all Swedish caregivers who are receiving benefits from the fund and the programs in which they are enrolled, and a list of all Swedish caregivers who applied for fund resources and were denied, and a detailed basis for the denial

As stewards of this important resource, we believe Swedish should be able to access timely information as it impacts our caregivers. Swedish certainly has a legitimate interest in making sure its substantial investment in the training fund is benefiting our caregivers to the maximum extent possible. The union previously presented a proposal to increase the amount Swedish is paying into the training fund. The Swedish team will respond to that specific proposal after the union has presented all of its economic proposals.

**Caucusing and Release Time**
Swedish currently compensates Swedish Medical Center RNs for time spent on Swedish-established committees where attendance is required, and considers all time spent by members of the ABC Committee and other Labor Management Committees as time worked. The Swedish team presented a proposal specifying that Swedish will pay nurses for up to 30 minutes of union caucus time per meeting for such committees, which is currently a benefit in the SMC Service and Technical contracts.

The Swedish team also proposed clarifying the language around expectations for releasing caregivers to attend these joint committees. Our proposal clarifies the roles and responsibilities a caregiver and a manager have to support the joint committee processes.

**Union Presents Proposals**

The union team presented proposals in the bargaining session related to “workplace preservation,” vacation accrual and holidays, weekend premium pay, lactation breaks, bargaining team rosters, and “paycheck errors” (for Edmonds caregivers only).
**Subcontracting**
The union rejected the subcontracting proposal presented by the Swedish team on July 10 and countered with a “work preservation” proposal that would have a sweeping impact on Swedish, its business partners and vendors. The proposal would prohibit Swedish from closing business lines, reducing staff numbers and reducing any other scope of work that involves any represented caregivers. Further, any entity affiliated with Swedish, including any joint ventures, would also be prohibited from altering its scope of business, and would be obliged to adhere to the terms of the union contract(s). Essentially, this would hinder Swedish’s ability to make business decisions that improve its ability to provide services to the communities it serves.

**Vacation Time**
The union’s holiday and vacation proposal would make major changes that include accelerating the accrual of vacation and adding one more paid holiday each year. SEIU’s proposal would increase the accrual rates for all caregivers by adding the additional holiday and would standardize the vacation accrual rates for all SEIU represented caregivers to the SMC RN accrual rates which are more than four of the five contracts. Their proposal also adds more vacation days for all caregivers with more than 15 years of seniority.

**Weekend Pay**
The union also presented a proposal to change the start of the weekend premium to 8 p.m. rather than 11 p.m. for weekend premium pay.

**Lactation Breaks**
The union’s proposal on lactation breaks would require Swedish to create a web portal that informs caregivers about the locations of all designated lactation areas. The proposal would require travel time be added to reasonable break time for lactation and would require additional designated areas for lactation, also known as “mothers’ rooms.” Swedish currently provides access to a refrigerator for storing breast milk but the proposal would also require Swedish provide adequate space to store a pump.
**Bargaining Roster**
The union’s bargaining roster proposal would require Swedish to provide additional information about all covered employees, including telephone, email, and race and ethnicity, and a list of all employment status changes for bargaining unit employees via a secure site.

**Paycheck Errors**
The union presented a proposal entitled “paycheck errors” for the Edmonds caregivers that would mirror the language in the SMC contracts.

**Bargaining Teams to Meet Once More in August**
The teams had previously agreed to hold one “main table” bargaining session in August. That session will be held on August 13.

**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.

Additionally, we will be distributing this newsletter via email as well as linking it in We Swedish. 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
If you have feedback for the team on contract changes you would like to see, please reach out to your bargaining team representative.