

UNION CONTRACT UPDATE

ARHS RN NEGOTIATIONS: UNITED TO MAKE ARHS
THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE AND PROVIDER OF CHOICE

Contract expires Dec. 31

Our current union contract expires on Dec. 31. Negotiations are scheduled through Dec. 14 and, as a Union, we expressed a goal to management of trying to be in a position of ratifying a new contract on Dec. 15.

Our Union's top priorities are to ensure ARHS is the employer of choice and the provider of choice. As Paula Stellabotte, chapter president, said at negotiations: "We as RNs want to feel proud of our hospital — we want to confidently say we are the employer of choice, but there are too many days where we just aren't feeling that." As result the Union is focused on the following



"Our focus in negotiations (as when we formed our union) is patient care, safety and satisfaction (those objectives have not changed). In order to give excellent care to our patients and become the employer of choice, we need to have the staff and the resources to obtain these goals. We are hopeful that management will work with us to meet these goals."

— Sue Delozier, RN PACU

goals for these negotiations.

- Maintaining quality, affordable healthcare
- Staffing ratio improvements,

with a greater focus on acuity

- Wages to help maintain recruitment and retention
- Improvements in opportunities for Professional Development

On the other hand, the Hospital is proposing major changes to healthcare and the creation of a new PTO system.

While both sides are far apart on these and other key issues, we have reached some tentative agreements regarding:

- Clarifications on scheduling language
- Secured retirement plan for next contract
- New protections on holiday scheduling
- Layoff protections



GET UPDATES ONLINE: For reports on negotiations, an event calendar, news archive, and to sign up for e-mail updates, visit the ARHS Nurses United page at **ARHSNURSESUNITED.ORG**

MANAGEMENT PROPOSES NEW PTO SYSTEM

Management proposed an entirely new PTO system that would modify the current system of vacation time, sick time, holiday time, and personal time. The Union rejected the hospital's proposal, as it would result in major changes in many areas. One of the biggest concerns is that after 3 sick days employees likely

would be utilizing vacation time if they are sick. Also the PTO system results in a more stringent disciplinary schedule for absences, and that any unscheduled time off would be considered an "occurrence." Management indicated that the primary reason they made the proposal was to address employees who abuse sick time. The Union responded with a proposal that maintains the current vacation, sick, and holiday system by tries to address some of the hospital's concerns about abuse of sick time.



"We as union RN's want to make ARHS is the caregiver of choice. Through negotiations, we want to establish the safest and most efficient environment for our patients and nurses. We are optimistic that management will collaborate with us on reaching our vision."

— Matt Consalvo, RN, B-3

RNs express concerns with hospital uniform plan

While RNs understand the need for greater consistency in uniforms and how that could benefit patients, the Union ex-

pressed concerns with the hospital's proposal for RNs to have the same uniform, color, and logo. RNs biggest concern is the hospital's require-

ment of the logo, the quality of the uniforms, and that the Hospital is not proposing to provide any uniforms or increase the uniform allowance.

Hospital team proposes major healthcare changes

In our most recent negotiating session, the hospital gave us a proposal for major changes to healthcare benefits starting in 2012.

Here are some of the key changes that management proposed:

- Significant out of pocket costs for employees, with new deduct-

ibles of up to \$1,000 for singles and \$2,000 for family.

- 25% healthcare premium payments (up from 11%) for individuals who do not participate in filling out a Health Risk Assessment and carrying out any recommended actions for a wellness program. Additionally, we do not yet

know the full details of the Wellness Program, because the hospital has not finalized the details of the program.

- Change in pharmacy benefits, with some increases in co-pays, and employees must use Kopp pharmacy at Station Mall or Howard Avenue, or else pay double the normal co-pays.

Focus on: Staffing and patient care

On November 22 and 23, Union and Management focused negotiations on staffing and patient care. RNs laid out the following as increasing demands we are under:

- More ancillary duties for RNs
- Increasing complexity and acuity
- New regulatory and paperwork challenges



RNs presented these key priorities for improving patient care:

- Improved Staffing Ratios Adjusted for Acuity
- Additional afternoon and evening staffing in procedural areas

- Addressing concerns with pulling
- Maintaining at least 1 RN on-call when there is downstaffing
- Maintain Labor and Delivery as a closed unit

The Hospital responded by recognizing some of the challenges but wants to maintain flexibility in how it staffs and does not want to commit additional resources to RN staffing.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

DON'T FORGET THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

Final Scheduled Dates for Negotiations:

- **December 6, 7, 8** at the Ramada Inn (Start times may vary)
- **December 13, 14** at the Holiday Inn Express (starting in the early morning)
- **Wednesday, December 15: Important Membership Meeting**

at the Holiday Inn Express: 8 a.m., 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 8 p.m.

- **PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH** with members of your negotiating committee and check the website as important additional membership meeting(s) may need to be scheduled in December.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS?

Contact Tommy Whitehouse, at 814-933-6800, or a member of the union bargaining committee.

