



For Local 8 Members at Tri-Cities Community Health

September 30, 2022

Staffing and Bargaining Update

Administration Staffing Changes

This is a very unsettling time in the Administration Building. Two of the people that the Union works with regularly are leaving the organization. As you have all been told, Jim Merrill is on Administrative Leave from the organization. Carlee Nave, Director of Human Resources, has resigned with her last day of work next week, October 14th. We were told this week that the organization has brought in a private contract service to serve in the CEO role. I am very hopeful that these changes will not affect any of you on a daily basis. I would assume from the Union standpoint that these changes will slow down response times when I am working with Management on issues that arise. Only time will tell.

Negotiation Meetings

We have had two bargaining (negotiation) sessions with Management. Management is hoping that we will work with them by primarily focusing our efforts on Wages and a one-year contract (rather than the typical three-year agreement). We feel that this is a manageable task if Management agrees to not only look at Market Adjustments and Cost of Living Increases for all, but also increase the negotiation responsibilities, frequency, and scope of our abilities at our Labor Management Meetings so we can continue to be effective in keeping up with employee needs and concerns.



We meet again on October 14th. At that meeting we will present Management with a full Wage proposal including stronger language regarding the Labor Management Committee responsibilities. Their response to that proposal will guide us to whether we focus only on those topics or do a full contract negotiation with three-year timelines.

How you can help

The best thing we can do right now is stand in solidarity. We need to let Management, your Community, and your Patients know that you stand together with your Union, Bargaining Team, and Co-workers for a fair and equitable Wages and Benefits. We have asked you to wear stickers for our last two bargaining sessions and have been told that several of you wore them, but not everyone did. We really need more of you to take part in this action for it to have the desired effect. When you wear those stickers, it starts a conversation that you may not even know is happening, but believe me, it creates a stir in the organization. On **October 13th** I will be dropping off stickers in breakrooms again for you to wear on the **October 14th**. **Please wear the stickers with pride and solidarity on October 14th.**



Pay Equity

In accordance with your Union Contract Article 10 Salary and Compensation Section 7 Pay Equity: <https://www.opeiu8.org/wp-content/uploads/opeiu8/CONTRACTS2/TCCH%202019-2022.pdf?ver=2021-02-10-104704-753> We have requested that Management review all employee salaries to ensure that employees are placed on the correct step that most closely reflects their years of experience. So far Management has reviewed the classifications of Medical Assistants, Optometry, Pharmacy, and Janitorial. When those were reviewed your Employer found that they needed to increase several Employee's step placement which resulted in an overall increase of \$81,000 in wages. Several employees in those classifications have reached out to me to ask for further clarification and review, which we are working through right now. We are working with Management on the other

classifications and should be receiving that information shortly. Once that information is received, I will contact those employees to share those findings.

Use of Sick and Vacation Leave

I was contacted by several of you over the past two weeks with a change in practice regarding use of Sick and Vacation Leave. Management was implementing a change where they were starting the discipline process if you had exhausted your Sick Leave and needed to supplement your absence with Vacation Leave. This change is not only a Change in Working Conditions but does not reflect what your Contract and their own Policy reflects. I immediately filed a Demand to Bargain and a Grievance regarding this issue. We were able to discuss this at our negotiation meeting and share with Management some of the examples you all had shared with me to resolve this issue quickly. Management will not be issuing any form of discipline for this practice and will continue with the past practice of allowing you to supplement Sick leave with Vacation leave as needed. This was quickly resolved because of you all contacting me quickly, giving me examples of what was happening, and your Union Contract rules and regulations with the National Labor Relations Board. Please keep up the good work and collaboration!

If you have any questions, contact your Union Representative, Angie Wedekind, at (509) 306-0586, angie@opeiu8.org.

