

SNA NEWS Special Bulletin

Fax: 575-8138

**JULY
2009**

Special points of
interest:

- Attention Staff Nurses!
- The Hospital's Proposal
- Next Steps

ATTENTION STAFF NURSES!

Members of the SNA Board and Representatives of Hospital Administration met on Wednesday, July 22, 2009 @ 4:30pm.

The purpose of this meeting was for the Hospital to present it's proposal for a wage re-opener to the current contract in effect until midnight September 30, 2010.

THE HOSPITAL'S PROPOSAL:

To freeze all Staff Nurse wages at their current level through the life of the current contract!

This means no wage increase on October 1, 2009 rather than the 2% wage increase we negotiated

and

No wage increase on March 1, 2010 rather than the 2.5% wage increase we negotiated

and

No step increases that the contract guarantees to Nurses earning a step increase.

The Hospital's reasons for proposing these changes: Representatives of Hospital Adm. Indicate that foregoing these negotiated wage increases & step increases would save approximately \$1.2 million.

The SNA Board made several points during this meeting:

1. The current contract was negotiated last summer/fall. The economic recession with stock market losses was underway at that time. Staff Nurses are wondering why the Hospital did not address such economic concerns at that time?

Hospital representative's indicate that Aug/Sept 2008 was a "different world". The economy was not in the state it is now.

2. Regarding the decreased investment income for the St. Joseph's Health System Nurses have experienced the same losses in their 401(a) and 401(k) retirement plans. Freezing wages and step increases will only delay retirement fund recovery.

Hospital representatives acknowledge this fact.

3. Staff Nurses and the SNA Board are aware of the recent acquisition of Laguna Beach Hospital by one of the St. Joseph Health System's Hospitals. This transaction does not correlate with the information given that the Health System is in financial trouble and needs to cut back on expenses.

Are employees expected to cut back on wages in order to fund expansion of the system?

Hospital representative indicate that Mission Hospital (a "Sister Hospital") bought Laguna Beach Hospital, not the St. Joseph's System.

4. Many Staff Nurses have experienced a significant decrease in income due to Mandatory ROH's. In OR, PACU, Out Patient, ASC, Endo and Perinatal departments, Nurses have already accrued 80-100 hrs of MORH's this year.

Hospital representatives acknowledge this fact.

5. The substantial reduction in the Care Partner Matrix and the failure of the Hospital to staff to acuity criteria for a great number of shifts have caused many, many Nurses to feel frustrated and disheartened by the unsafe patient care they are giving. The documentation the SNA Board is collecting, indicates that errors are increasing and essential patient care cannot be completed during a shift.

Hospital representatives indicate that they feel that the Rapid Improvement Initiatives will improve systems at the Hospital.

6. The Hospital proposal would require that Staff Nurses ratify a change to the current contract. Doing so would require that Nurses cooperate with the Hospital. Given that many, many Nurses feel that they are being treated shabbily- despite how fast they run or how efficient they are- they are trying to deliver patient care in impossible circumstances and then either berated for working overtime and/or disciplined for inevitable errors. We cannot imagine why the Hospital would think that such cooperation from Staff Nurses is likely at this point. The feedback we have received is that Staff Nurses certainly don't feel that the Hospital has earned their cooperation.

The SNA Board cannot recommend that Staff Nurses accept the contract changes proposed by the Hospital.

We welcome your feedback on the website and the SNA Message line. SNA members will have the opportunity to vote on this proposal.

Next Steps:

VOTE on the Hospital's proposal on Tuesday August 11, 2009.

Voting will take place:

- On the SNA website www.snanews.com **5am- 5pm**
- SNA Message line 575-8853 **5am-5pm**
- In person at the SNA Office ***10am-5pm***
401A College Ave., Santa Rosa (corner of College & Glenn)

Only SNA Members may vote. Staff Nurses who contribute dues equivalent \$ to charities or the SNA ED Fund may not vote.

If voting online or on the message line **you must provide your RN license#.**

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