

April 8, 2013

Dear Nurse _____,

We are very disappointed to learn that the MNA has scheduled a strike authorization vote for Thursday, April 11, 2013, so quickly after two productive bargaining sessions with the University and Memorial/Hahnemann bargaining teams on March 25 and March 26. It is troubling that the MNA wants to push for a disruptive and unproductive strike that will have no impact at the bargaining table, but will negatively affect the Medical Center, our employees, and most importantly, our patients. Unfortunately, this is the way that the MNA and its national affiliate, the National Nurses United (NNU), now conduct negotiations across Massachusetts and the country.

The MNA claims the Medical Center has refused “any meaningful improvement in staffing conditions.” This is simply untrue. Plain and simple, here are the facts:

- The Medical Center put a comprehensive staffing proposal on the table that included the hiring of 9 to 10 FTEs to alleviate issues in the Emergency Department and also included no assignment or reduced assignments for many resource nurses throughout the Medical Center. This proposal would cost more than \$1.5 million per year. In addition, the Medical Center’s staffing proposal agreed to follow the AWHONN standards for mother and baby couplets in Maternity, which would require adding approximately 17 FTEs, which would cost more than \$2.5 million per year.
- The MNA’s current staffing proposal would cost more than \$30 million per year.

The MNA claims that the Medical Center is attempting to slash nurses’ pension, health insurance and time-off benefits. This is simply untrue. Again, here are the facts:

- The Medical Center’s pension proposal, which does not even take effect until 2017, preserves the long-term viability of our current defined benefit pension plan at a time when almost every other hospital has done away with its defined benefit pension plan.
- Even with the proposed change in the defined benefit pension plan, our retirement benefit would remain one of the richest offered in the state.
- All of our other unions correctly recognized that to preserve our pension plan, it needed to be changed and worked with the Medical Center to revise the pension plan.
- All of our other employees, including management, union and non-union, have agreed to changes to the current pension plan.
- All of our other employees have agreed to necessary changes to health insurance benefits and time-off accruals.

You should also know that we are working hard to reach an agreement on issues beyond staffing that matter to you. Here are the facts:

- The Medical Center has agreed to 6 of the MNA’s proposals.
 - The Medical Center has made a formal counter-proposal that would limit its ability to subcontract nursing work, something which is in few MNA contracts.
 - The Medical Center also made a formal counter-proposal to increase on-call pay.
 - In addition to step movement, the Medical Center is proposing a combination of lump-sum payments and across-the-board salary increases.
- (over, please)***

We want to continue to focus and work with you to reach a mutual solution to further your professional practice of nursing and improve satisfaction from your work. We agree that our system is not perfect, but we need to continue to work together to make it better. We believe we can reach a fair agreement without resorting to a strike.

It is our sincere hope that you consider that the only thing a strike will do is cause injury to you, your co-workers, your patients and our Medical Center. We had hoped that the MNA's approach toward negotiations at the Medical Center would have been more collaborative, rather than employing the threatening approach that they and the NNU seem to prefer using at other hospitals in Massachusetts and across the country. We have heard from many nurses who oppose a strike. We urge all nurses to vote on April 11 and let their voice be heard.

Sincerely,

The UMass Memorial Medical Center – Memorial/Hahnemann Bargaining Team