

# CRMC UNION TRIBUNE

BARGAINING UPDATE #8 • OCTOBER 17, 2019



## MORE PROGRESS

Earlier this week we provided an update from the bargaining session that took place on Monday, October 14 and uploaded copies of both the union and CRMC proposals on our website: [seihcmn.org/crmcbargaining2019](http://seihcmn.org/crmcbargaining2019). We want to let everyone know that there was an additional verbal proposal the management team added at the end of our bargaining session, late in the evening on the 14th, that we overlooked when preparing the update. The management team increased their offer, by adding a 2% market adjustment for four additional classifications in Unit #3, including: Denial Specialists, Data Analysts, Financial Advisors and Prior Authorization Specialists. This proposal matches the proposed market adjustment applied to the Claims classification that was in their last economic proposal. This is a positive development and we apologize for not including the verbal proposal in the update earlier this week.



## RUMOR CONTROL

Over the past week there have been a few emails sent out by CRMC's Human Resources Director and CEO that appear to be written with help from their lawyer, and lead negotiator, Grant Collins. The emails include some statements that are factually inaccurate and some that state their opinion on issues with which we sincerely disagree. One example of factually inaccurate information relates to fines. Our union does not fine members, for any reason, and never has. Article 13 of our Bylaws specifically forbids it. Grant Collins knows (or should have known) that we don't fine members. We have no idea why he would allow such factually inaccurate information to be included in the email. Maybe CRMC should ask for a refund???

Seriously though, we think the tone in their message has been unfortunate, and a little disrespectful at times. We acknowledge they have a right to express their point of view, (even when we disagree with it) but we also want to encourage everyone to take what they say with a grain of salt. Let's stay positive in our interactions with management and with each other! As long as we stick together, we will be able to win our best contract yet!

If you have questions or read something from management that sounds wrong, it probably is. Talk to a bargaining team member to get the straight answers.

## HOW DO CRMC'S PROPOSALS COMPARE?

All of us on the bargaining team were elected by our co-workers to serve on negotiations and all proposals were voted on by the membership last summer. There is no outside "union" determining our proposals for us or "targeting" CRMC. The union is just us, at CRMC, trying to make our jobs and contract better. This is especially important this year since the data shows we have fallen behind on wages AND benefits. As a result of the below market wages and benefits, CRMC is having problems recruiting and we are now so short in certain departments that CRMC wants the right to mandate employees to work overtime, despite the impact that this has on us or our families.

Despite what management included in their emails, our wages and benefits are below market. CRMC has not proposed the same contract that other SEIU members ratified, even in the examples they provided. The emails from CRMC imply that a 2% wage increase for CRMC workers is the same as a 2% wage increase in Brainerd or the Twin Cities. We disagree. In fact, if we agree to the same percentage wage increases, it will mean that we will get less money and we will never catch up on wages. In fact, we will fall even further behind.

For example:

A 2% increase to the \$12.68 starting wage in EVS = \$.25

A 2% increase to the \$17.13 starting wage in EVS at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids = \$.34

As you can see, the cents per hour increase at Mercy Hospital is worth 9 cents more, a 37% difference. It would actually take a 3% raise at CRMC to provide the same increase in take home pay. And it would take more than a 3% raise to move our wages closer. It is also worth noting that an EVS employee with 25 years at CRMC today makes less than an EVS employee at Mercy Hospital does on their first day! We think this is wrong and want our next contract to make things better, not worse.

# CRMC UNION TRIBUNE: BARGAINING UPDATE

CRMC management simply wants us to agree to the same percentage increase without comparing actual pay rates to actual pay rates and without comparing other benefit provisions either. The average pay difference between St. Joseph's in Brainerd and CRMC for unit 1 employees is 6-8%. And that difference exists before we begin to compare benefit plans.

## For example:

Health Care premiums at St. Joseph's Hospital in Brainerd are hundreds of dollars per year lower than what we pay at CRMC. CRMC has not yet informed us of the premium costs for 2020, but here's how we compare this year.

Employee Monthly Cost	CRMC High Deductible	St. Joseph's High Deductible	St. Joseph's Choice PPO
Single	\$129.83	\$89.19	\$99.81
Single + 1 (sp)	\$467.80	\$297.30	\$332.71
Single + kids	\$432.05	N/A	N/A
Family	\$527.54	\$401.91	\$432.52

The monthly difference for Single coverage in a high deductible plan is: \$40.64 and for Family coverage it is \$125.63. That's up to \$1,500 per year more that we pay for our families! The difference amounts to as much as 10% less in take home pay for full time workers at CRMC with family coverage. Our bargaining team will continue to advocate for a better deal for our members that bring us up to, or at least closer to, the standard of other SEIU contracts in our market. We are disappointed that CRMC has made no proposals that address our premiums or deductibles.

## UNION EXECUTIVE BOARD VOTED TO SUPPORT STRIKE FUNDS IF NEEDED

On Tuesday, October 15, our statewide union Executive Board met in St. Paul and voted unanimously to authorize strike funds for SEIU members at CRMC. If the membership decides it needs to engage in a one-day Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) strike the union strike fund will pay 100% of lost wages to all actively picketing strikers. The board also voted to authorize funds in the event of a retaliatory "lock-out" by CRMC management. While we believe it would be illegal for CRMC to "lock-out" workers following a one-day "Unfair Labor Practice" strike, the Executive Board wanted all members to know they have the full support of the union regardless of what CRMC decides to do.

If the membership ultimately decides to strike, our union bargaining team would provide a 10-day notice to CRMC to arrange for the care needs of patients and residents as required by law. We would also request strike sanction from other area unions, including the building trades unions in Central Minnesota, the Teamsters, and others to request that they honor any SEIU union picket lines.

## CAN CRMC RETALIATE AGAINST UNION WORKERS FOR ENGAGING IN A ONE-DAY STRIKE?

Legally, no. Because members voted to authorize a one-day Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) strike, CRMC cannot legally hire permanent replacements. It would also be illegal to retaliate against anyone for engaging in "protected union activity." Under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, workers have the right to wear union buttons, to support a union or not support a union, and to strike if they chose to do so. CRMC is permitted to hire temporary replacement workers for the limited duration strike and because we are a union of health care workers, we would encourage them to do so.

Because our contract has expired, CRMC does have the right to "lock-out" workers during a labor dispute. This is the same right we have as workers, but it's the reverse of a strike, where management prevents us from working. Lock-outs are very rare in the healthcare industry. Only one recorded lockout has occurred in health care in Minnesota state history.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The bargaining team will be back in negotiations on Monday, October 28. We will be prepared to stay as late as needed to get a better deal, one that our members can be proud of. Because CRMC has agreed to improve their proposal, we will bring any new offers back to the membership for another vote. All members in good standing will have the opportunity to accept or reject the proposals and we will vote again on any decisions to authorize a one-day ULP strike.

## VOTING DETAILS

Because CRMC has improved their offer from what members voted to reject, we plan to present any new proposals to the membership for consideration, before filing a 10-day notice for a ULP strike. That means that members will have a chance to review and vote on all new proposals that we receive on October 28, before any decisions are made. Members will have the ability to accept or reject the new proposals and will need to vote again to authorize any work stoppage. Specific times and locations will be set by the bargaining team on the 28th. Copies of any proposal will be provided to members at least three days before voting.

## STAY STRONG!

As the bargaining team, we are taking our responsibility to bargain a fair contract for our labor very seriously. All of us have volunteered time and energy to this effort, to learn the process, to research proposals and to keep everyone informed of what is happening. Thank you for your confidence in us. Let's stick together and keep working for the contract we deserve!

In Solidarity,

The Union Bargaining Team