

SEIU HEALTHCARE MINNESOTA • HEALTHPARTNERS BARGAINING UPDATE

MARRIAGE PENALTY

DECEMBER 17, 2019 • UPDATE #2

This week, our SEIU Healthcare Minnesota bargaining team has three days of collective bargaining for our next union contract. As our co-workers continue to represent us at the table, we acknowledge and appreciate that they are advocating against HealthPartners proposals that would be detrimental to ourselves and our families. Since there are still many days of bargaining left before our current contract expires at the end of January, bargaining this week continues to be focused mostly on smaller issues without big pricetags.

We know that most members' primary concerns are not about those issues but about the huge proposed cuts to our health benefits. So we will focus on one specific piece of

the healthcare proposals HealthPartners management has brought to the table: a new Marriage Penalty.

Those of us who have worked for HealthPartners over the years know the value of our benefits, and know how hard we have fought in order to provide better lives for ourselves and for our families. The proposed Marriage Penalty is a huge step backwards. With the new penalty, HealthPartners seeks to add more costs to the premiums and copays of those who are married, on top of all the other healthcare concessions and cost-shifts they have proposed for all of us. In some cases this would more than double the current cost of members' current monthly premiums.

FOR FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: (30+ HOURS/WEEK)

	Current Premium for Classic Plan Through Our Union Contract	Management's Proposed Premium Cost for Classic Plan	Current Premium for Choice Plan Through Our Union Contract	Management's Proposed Premium Cost for Choice Plan
Single	\$0	\$0	\$60	\$80
Family without Spouse	\$70	\$70	\$125	\$175
Family with Spouse	\$70	\$170	\$125	\$275

FOR PART TIME EMPLOYEES: (15-29 HOURS/WEEK)

	Current Premium for Classic Plan Through Our Union Contract	Management’s Proposed Premium Cost for Classic Plan	Current Premium for Choice Plan Through Our Union Contract	Management’s Proposed Premium Cost for Choice Plan
Single	\$40	\$40	\$70	\$93
Family without Spouse	\$115	\$115	\$135	\$190
Family with Spouse	\$115	\$215	\$135	\$290

As the charts show, families could be facing an increase in premiums of \$1,200 annually just from this new penalty, bringing the total annual cost of premiums beyond \$2,000 for many. Further fees will be added on to copays if your spouse does not take their Health Assessment. These copays span between \$20 per visit to a SmartCare clinic, and up to \$80 per visit outside of a SmartCare Clinic.

Jean Pfarr, an RN at the Specialty Center and a bargaining team member, talks about the importance of the current benefits for herself and her spouse: “Several years ago, my husband was hospitalized for over a month. During that hospitalization, he had multiple expensive tests done. If we’d had a deductible or out-of-pocket expenses to pay, we would have been bankrupt.”



Bargaining team member Lee Daniels, who works in the lab at the Health Center for Women, University Avenue Clinic, sees the impact this would have for her family: “I know HealthPartners is not going to give me a raise of \$1200 to cover that fee. It would be detrimental to my household to pay that extra \$1200 a year.”

While HealthPartners has earned \$7 billion in revenue, they are moving to shift their costs onto frontline staff in order to add to their bottom line. This is wrong. HealthPartners staff should not have to fear bankruptcy when accessing medical care for themselves, their children, or their spouse.

Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved. If you want to learn how you can make your voice heard, contact SEIU organizer Elise Frieder at elise.frieder@seiuhcmn.org.