

May 13, 2013

Dear (Nurses Name),

On Friday, May 10, 2013, the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) officially notified the Medical Center of its intent to strike on Thursday, May 23, 2013. We are all deeply disappointed that the MNA is asking you and other nurses to go out on strike. A strike hurts everyone – our patients, you and your family, all Medical Center employees, the Medical Center and the community we serve. We hope that you will reject the strike and show up to work on May 23, 2013 to care for your patients.

The Medical Center has been and remains committed to working collaboratively with the MNA to avoid a strike. Sessions with the bargaining committees are scheduled with the MNA Memorial/Hahnemann May 14 and 20 and with the MNA University May 15 and 21.

We've worked hard to show you and your colleagues that we are listening to your concerns. We put proposals on the table to increase staffing in the areas that you identified as important, including the Emergency Department, ICUs, Maternity and NICU. We also proposed reduced or no patient assignments for charge nurses on all units.

In addition to the substantial movement on staffing issues, the Medical Center provided a concrete proposal to limit subcontracting and also proposed salary increases consistent with what other employees at the Medical Center have received. In return, the Medical Center asked that the MNA agree to the same pension changes that all of the Medical Center's other employees, including management, union and non-union, have agreed to – a change necessary to preserve the pension. This pension change will not even take effect until 2017. As we told the MNA, we are also seeking some change on health insurance and time-off accruals consistent with what our other union partners agreed to. The MNA has rejected virtually every proposal and counter-proposal made by the Medical Center.

Replacement Period

In the face of a strike, we will have to decrease patient census to ensure that there is no disruption in the quality of care we provide. We will also bring in qualified replacement nurses to care for your patients. In order to secure a sufficient number of nurses to provide safe patient care, we are contractually committed to paying the replacement nurses for five days. As a result, only those Medical Center nurses who choose to work on the day of a strike will be permitted to work during the five-day replacement period. After the five-day replacement period, Medical Center nurses will return to work based on census needs.

If you wish to work during the strike and five-day replacement period, you must arrive at work on time on the first day of the strike, May 23, 2013. If you choose not to show up on the first day of the strike, you will be returned to work, as census permits, after the five-day replacement period is over on May 28, 2013. If you are not scheduled to work on the first day of the strike, you must contact your manager to affirm your availability to work.

While we will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement, we must have a plan in place to continue to provide high-quality, safe patient care during any strike. We hope you will choose to come to work on May 23.

I urge you to continue to reference umassmemorialchange.org for the most up-to-date information relative to our negotiations.

Sincerely,



Eric Dickson, MD, MHCM, FACEP
President and Chief Executive Officer
UMass Memorial Health Care