

VMC Bargaining Update

If you haven't noticed already we are near the expiration date of our current contract which ends June 30, 2017. Since Valley is a public sector employer the good news is that VMC must adhere to the terms and conditions of your contract for up to 1 year past expiration of your contract, which means nothing can change during this time.

Our goal is always to reach a tentative agreement before contract expiration, but sometimes that doesn't happen, and our priority is to reach a fair contract! Negotiations have been underway since May and we have had 5 negotiating sessions thus far.

In April we learned of VMC's "Perfect Storm" that has created a \$30 million dollar budget shortfall. We thought we would be discussing a lot of takeaways at the table, but surprisingly VMC has put forward a number of economic proposals that will increase wages for some:

1. An upgrade to the **Patient Resource Representatives** from pay grade "G" to "H" due to job complexity
2. An upgrade to PSR Float Pool from pay grade "G" to "H" because they will need to learn the Patient Resource Representative (PRR) job to order to float to the Patient Resource Center for coverage needs.
3. A Performance Incentive Program totaling \$1000 annually **ONLY** for the **Patient Resource Representatives** if they achieve certain criteria.
4. Preceptor Pay Premium for those who train their co-workers, but are not considered a lead
5. Holiday Pay for all hours of your shift if you don't work the holiday, i.e., if you work 10-hour or 12-hour shifts (not just limited to 8 hours).

Although VMC has made proposals to spend money in these areas, the money being offered to the OPEIU bargaining unit for an across-the-board wage increase falls short of providing a fair wage increase during the term of the contract.

VMC is proposing a 2.75% wage increase over the life of the contract (3 year term):

2017- 0.5%

2018- April 0.5% and October 0.75%

2019- 1.0% October

VMC has requested to bring in a mediator from the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) to help with negotiations and OPEIU has agreed to this request as long as it doesn't delay negotiations. Our bargaining team doesn't believe we are at the point of needing a mediator, but we don't oppose if it helps us reach a tentative agreement. A mediator is a neutral party who helps both sides work through the issues and explore solutions to reach a mutual agreement.

STAY TUNED:

Our next session is scheduled for July 11, 2017 with 1-2 more sessions anticipated for July.

OPEIU's priorities for 2017 Negotiations:

When we surveyed the membership to seek the priorities and improvements needed for our contract we received a lot of feedback about:

1. Fair wage increases
2. Protection from layoffs
3. Job security

Our bargaining team is committed to ensuring our contract priorities are being addressed during this negotiation. We are far apart in our economic proposals but will continue to negotiate.

Do we have your email?

Please provide us your personal email address to stay connected and to receive updates that impact you! Join the Contract Action Team (CAT) to help spread the word and distribute the latest update from the bargaining table to your co-workers. Maintaining a network of communication helps to keep our Union strong and everyone informed.



Bargaining team from Left to Right: Brittany Sluyter, ISR II VDI; Brenda Larson, PSR North Benson Urgent Care; LaTerria Belin ISR II MRI; & Liz Chraca, PSR Fairwood Clinic..

2017 Medical Benefits Update

Last year your Union Representatives from OPEIU and member Cindy Grau, PSR from OHS, participated in the joint **Labor Management Healthcare Benefits Committee**, where changes and recommendations to the medical and wellness program were discussed.

In September of 2016 OPEIU members voted on a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") regarding the changes to your medical benefits and wellness program for 2017 that will continue to be negotiated separately and apart from our contract in coalition with other Unions through 2020. OPEIU has found that working in Coalition with our fellow union partners helps us to achieve the best results for our members. As a participant in this Committee for 2017 we were able to negotiate improvements such as lower premiums, a lower spousal surcharge, and a \$50 discount towards your premiums if you completed the necessary steps for the Wellness Program.

THE PLAN FOR 2018: Have you set up your StayWell account?

"StayWell" is the vendor for the Wellness Program and through their portal employees track activities and progress made during the year. To get started, the first step in the wellness program is to:

1. **Create an account in the StayWell Employee Health Portal (need to provide name, date of birth, and employee ID)**

Once you've established your account next :

2. **Complete the StayWell Health Risk Assessment in 2017 (value 25 pts.)**
3. **Earn (and track) 100 points through various wellness activities.**

NOTE: You can accumulate points with activities during the year, but your points will not be reflected on the StayWell graph on the front page until you have completed your Health Assessment.

If you achieve these 3 goals you can **earn your way to "\$0" for "Employee only" or the \$50 discount for "Employee + Spouse" or "Employee + Children" or "Employee + Family" level coverage** towards your 2018 premiums. The premiums in 2018 will be the same amount as the 2017 premiums.

At our June **Labor Management Healthcare Benefits Committee** meeting, VMC shared that approximately 33% of eligible employees have completed the StayWell Health Risk Assessment to date. **The deadline is October 31, 2017!** Please make sure to complete these three things in time to earn your discount for next year! If there are questions or if you are having problems with the program please share with your Union Representatives so that we can bring these issues forward to address.

Labor Management Healthcare Benefits Committee is comprised of representatives from:

- VMC HR
- VMC Benefits team
- OPEIU Local 8
- Operating Engineers
- SEIU 1199 NW
- UFCW 21

Your "Weingarten" Rights

You have the right to union representation any time you face a meeting or discussion with a supervisor that could lead to discipline. Your employer usually has no obligation to inform you of your right to have a union representative present. **You must ask for your rights!** Your employer must give you time to contact a union representative and allow the representative to be present at the meeting.

"Weingarten"* rights apply when a supervisor is questioning an employee to obtain information the employee reasonably believes could be used as grounds for discipline. Under our contract, if the meeting is solely to inform about a discipline without an investigation, these rights still apply. **Here's what you can say:**

"If this meeting is an investigation that could in any way lead to discipline or termination, I request that my steward or union representative be present before continuing."

Your employer may:

- (1) agree to your request and wait for the union representative to arrive or reschedule the meeting;
- (2) deny your request and end the meeting immediately;
- (3) give you the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without representation, or
- (4) deny the request and continue to ask questions. **You should then repeatedly but respectfully ask for union representation and protest the denial of your rights.**

(*From a 1975 U.S. Supreme Court decision NLRB vs. Weingarten, Inc.)

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Check out the award-winning **Weingarten Rights Shop Steward Training Video** at www.opeiu8.org and click on Stewards Corner.

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