

Update for MNA Members at Steward Health Care Hospitals

February 5, 2013

There has been much fast-paced activity related to the pension, health insurance, bargaining for the four open contracts and safe staffing. This update will *summarize* as best as space allows.

Pension

On Jan. 25 (in Boston) and Feb. 4 (in NYC) Steward and MNA held the fifth and sixth face-to-face meetings in the pension settlement talks.

Some of the most significant concerns MNA has had about the concepts raised in Steward's proposed framework have been openly discussed. A substantial quantity of financial data has been exchanged.

Most questions raised to date by the MNA have received detailed substantive answers. We are now moving into more detailed analysis of the numbers while, on a parallel track, attorneys for both the MNA and Steward are focusing on the legal aspects of draft language of plan documents. The next meeting will be in Canton on Feb.15.

Joint Bargaining for the Four Hospitals

Bargaining for renewal contracts at Quincy Medical Center, Morton Hospital and Merrimack Valley Hospital and bargaining for a first contract at Holy Family Hospital has been too long and too frustrating of a process. As we began to escalate to public conflicts there has been a significant breakthrough: Steward Management has agreed to bargain with all four MNA bargaining committees at *one* bargaining table for a compact period of time in the hopes of reaching a settlement. Following are the dates of those bargaining sessions:

- Caucus Day (for bargaining committee members at MNA's Canton office): Feb. 8
- Bargaining Date (at MNA's Canton office): 2/14
- Bargaining Dates off site at Regis College: 2/11, 3/1, 3/4, 3/5, 3/8, 3/11, 3/12

Location: We've chosen Regis College as the off-site bargaining location, because it is central to all four hospitals (in Weston) and because it has quality, spacious facilities.

All Bargaining Committee Members from the four hospitals will be released from their schedules to participate. There will be updates from each day of talks.

If these talks bog down, the parties are free to return to their respective four tables. At the moment though, we are looking forward to a much more productive process in which management has pledged to have the right people at the table to make an effort to reach a settlement.

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Health Insurance

We held two face-to-face meetings with Steward to discuss the insurance rates for 2013 and beyond, as well as issues related to plan design at all eight hospitals. This is only a brief summary (more to come):

- 2012 co-pays and monthly share of the premium remain frozen while we are in negotiations.
- Morton hospital has some unique issues.
- MNA is making proposals to improve access to necessary services in the DPO and EPO plans, including proposals to broaden Tier 1 co-pays when services are not reasonable within Steward Tier 1 providers and to provide clear information to participants on the means to have a prompt appeal of decisions to charge a higher tier co-pay.
- MNA is proposing improvements in co-pays in the DPO in particular and negotiating monthly premium costs for both the DPO and EPO.
- Some MNA members had their insurance rejected at CVS in December and January. Management told us in bargaining that a) this was a mistake resulting from an error in the transfer of data to a new computer system, and b) they agreed to issue rebates to any of our insured people who had to pay out of pocket at a retail pharmacy as a result.
- They confirmed that co-pays remain frozen. In circumstances in which insurance cards have incorrect co-pays printed, the correct 2012 co-pays will be charged. New cards will be issued to replace the incorrect versions.

Safe Staffing

Nothing is more important than ensuring we are adequately staffed (among RNs, and, just as important, among non-RN patient care staff).

This issue will be central to the “one table talks.” It is also the central issue day to day at the eight hospitals. Example at Quincy: Recent talks have resulted in the posting (and active efforts to hire) 13 RNs and other patient care positions. At Quincy that is just an interim fix, as we continue the discussion on other holes that must immediately be filled. We are pleased that senior corporate staff members from Steward and the hospital's CEO are participating in these talks. It is imperative that we continue to make progress there and at each of the other seven MNA-represented hospitals.

Wage Reopener:

Our Limited Master Agreement calls for wage reopener negotiations to begin no later than April 2013 for new 2014 wage rates at Carney, Good Samaritan, Norwood and St. Elizabeth's. We intend to begin that process by holding bargaining committee meetings and preparing proposals in the coming 30 days.