

Collective Bargaining Update for March 10, 2022



On Thursday, March 10, bargaining teams for CGH Medical Center (CGHMC) and AFSCME, Council 31, met again to bargain over terms and conditions of employment for some CGHMC employees.

In Bargaining, When AFSCME Says “No,” CGHMC Employees, Patients, and Our Community Can Be Negatively Impacted

During last Thursday’s bargaining session with AFSCME, we presented revised proposals regarding hours of work, non-discrimination, grievance and arbitration, and reduction in workforce (provisions commonly included in nearly all collective bargaining agreements).

Our proposals also contained a list of provisions on which we indicated that, *for now*, we are standing firm. We provided the union with this list to focus their attention on the many areas where we have disagreement in hopes we can begin to narrow the gaps and find common ground.

Unfortunately, although we have tried to work with AFSCME, finding common ground has been difficult. And, in the end, we believe the lack of progress is impacting our employees and community.



For example, last fall we proposed moving some EMS employees (EMTs and Paramedics) to 24-hour shifts, a change that is widely favored. We first asked the union to agree to this change in October 2021; EMS supervisors have already moved to 24-hour shifts.

Yet AFSCME representatives have consistently refused to allow us to move the rest of the employees in EMS to 24-hour shifts because, in addition to the **roughly 800 hours of built-in overtime** that would result from the change, the union wants us to provide EMS employees hour-for-hour PTO accrual.

This is the union’s position even though moving EMS employees to 24-hour shifts would mean those employees would only be scheduled to work 120 days per year and – as such – would have more than ample time off from work.

The union’s refusal to allow EMS employees to move to 24-hour shifts has not only cost our EMS employees in lost wages but it has also hampered our recruiting efforts (we currently have 6 vacancies in EMS) because 24-hour shifts are the norm for EMS employees. This has, in turn, impacted the number of ambulances we are able to have in service and available at any given time for patients and the community.

Like our disagreements with the union over use of outside agency staff or our need to float staff to support their co-workers, the union’s position on 24-hour shifts in EMS is one more example of how AFSCME’s positions are not always aligned with the needs of our hospital, our patients, our employees, or the community.

We are scheduled to meet with the union again on March 22 and 30. As always, we will continue to keep you informed as the process develops.