



Questions & Answers

Why was a rally for Safe Patient Care planned when we have not concluded the negotiating process?

It was decided to set a date and have a rally for Safe Patient Care some time ago because it's important for the Kalamazoo community to understand that the Employer's current proposals would affect your nursing practice both personally and in the ways you provide care. When a public rally is planned, a date is set and then notices of your intent are sent to a variety of places including the hospital and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services. By federal law, you must give a 10-day notice of your rally. The rally was not set based on the progress of the negotiations.

Where are we in the negotiating process?

Negotiations were held with management on Tuesday, April 6 with a lack of movement by the Employer. Membership meetings will be held on Tuesday, April 13 at 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm at Sunnyside United Methodist Church, 2800 Gull Road, Kalamazoo.

Why has a new vote not been called?

We want to continue the negotiating process to reach a fair agreement before we bring anything back to a vote, and the parties have agreed to continue to meet. We have filed serious charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) regarding the Borgess administration's bargaining tactics. We believe these are all direct violations of the National Labor Relations Act and are illegal for Borgess management to engage in. Thirteen different violations were filed. If Borgess is found to be abusing labor law in this manner, they must cease and desist from this behavior and bargain a new contract.

Why didn't we take a vote the first time one was called?

At the end of the business day on Friday, March 5 before the vote was scheduled on Tuesday, March 9, the employer submitted changes to the proposal. This required carefully reviewing the proposal and getting

the revised information out to all members in time for them to consider it before voting – almost impossible to do fairly in three days. In addition, the employer had distributed misinformation about the election and interfered in the election process. As mentioned in the charges filed against Borgess, management cannot interfere with a union's lawful right to bargain collectively for wages and working conditions by interfering with, restraining or coercing employees. While not all Borgess nurses have been subjected to the treatment described in the charges, others reported that they were.

Are we going to go on strike or get locked out?

Neither MNA nor Borgess wants either one of these things to happen. The employer is the one who would choose to lock nurses out. MNA would mount legal challenges and call on faith, community, and labor leaders to support the nurses. The community response to locking over 700 nurses out of their jobs would be damaging at best not to mention the ill effect it would have on patient care.

As for a strike, that's also not MNA's call. The Borgess nurses would make that decision through a strike vote. There is no strike vote planned at this time. Our best scenario is to work with management to develop a contract that meets both parties' needs and move on from there.



What does it mean to work under an expired contract?

The Employer cannot unilaterally change the terms and conditions of the expired contract, which remains in effect (with the exception of dues collection and arbitration). In addition, nurses engaging in concerted union activities are still protected under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Your wages, hours of work, and conditions of employment are protected by the NLRA as negotiations continue under a new contract.

One thing you'll notice is that Borgess has quit collecting your monthly dues so you will be receiving notification regarding the funds that are normally taken from your checks.

Why does the Kalamazoo community need to be involved?

The Kalamazoo area community is already involved because they are our patients! If they've spent some time watching WWMT-3 or reading The Kalamazoo Gazette, they're also probably asking themselves what's going on with us, their nurses. We must tell them that it's our responsibility as patient advocates to continue the bargaining process to reach a fair agreement while making sure we are not being pressured into making a decision on a contract that could be harmful to patient and nurse alike. Therefore, we must get the Kalamazoo area community involved because what affects us will affect our patients. Our patients and the families of our patients need to be aware that we have high standards for safe patient care and we intend to meet them.

Every one of us at Borgess deserves the ability to provide safe patient care. We want to protect and improve the working conditions of all nurses at Borgess. The Employer's current proposals do not do that, and so we will continue to work toward securing a fair contract.