

CWA 1133 STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AS MANAGEMENT IGNORES AND REJECTS OUR DEMANDS FOR SAFE STAFFING AND COMPETITIVE PAY, HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AS WE GET CLOSER TO A STRIKE:

I'M HEARING LOTS OF RUMORS ABOUT STRIKES AT OUR HOSPITAL. IS MY HOSPITAL GOING ON STRIKE?

As part of the 2021 agreement for common table negotiations, Mercy is the only Hospital that has the ability to go on strike when the contract expires. This includes Mercy offsites: OLV, MCCC, MACC, WNYMP, and East Aurora.

It is still too early to know if there will be a strike or not. The Hospital has made concessionary proposals on Healthcare, has not accepted our proposals to make wages comparable in the area, and has said they are not interested in bargaining over staffing enforcement language. Therefore, we are recommending that Mercy employees save funds for the possibility of a strike.

WHEN DOES THE CONTRACT EXPIRE?

The contract expired on 6/30/25, but we mutually agreed to extend the contract until 9/13/25. We are required by law to give 10 days notice to Catholic Health in order to strike. With our strike vote scheduled for 9/8/25, this means that the earliest any strike would take place would be at midnight on 9/23/25.

DOES A STRIKE VOTE DEFINITELY MEAN WE ARE GOING ON STRIKE?

No, the bargaining committee will continue to work hard to reach a fair agreement with the Hospital even after a Strike Vote is taken. A strike is only a last resort when we have fully exhausted the bargaining process.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN BEFORE A STRIKE?

1. A majority of members must vote to authorize a strike.
2. The CWA President must approve any strike. One of the key factors the President looks at in approving a strike is the strength of our mobilization campaign and the number of members participating in mobilization activities and actions.
3. The Union must give a ten-day notice.

IF I AM ON STRIKE, WHEN WILL I BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR NEW YORK STATE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS?

Normally, you will be eligible for unemployment at 7 days on strike. You may be eligible sooner under additional circumstances.

(<https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/09/p835-ui-and-strikes-9-23.pdf>)

**STILL HAVE
QUESTIONS?**

TOWN HALL CALLS
Every Tuesday 8am & 8pm



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HOW MUCH DOES CWA'S MEMBERSHIP RELIEF FUND PAY WHILE ON STRIKE?

Members who perform strike duty responsibilities such as picketing are entitled to the following benefits.

- Day 1-14: No benefit
- After Day 15: \$400 per week
- After Day 29: \$500 per week

WILL I HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE WHILE ON STRIKE?

Most employers discontinue health insurance immediately after workers are on strike. CWA has made a commitment to assisting striking workers in paying for their health care needs out of the Members' Relief Fund during their participation in the strike. Working with Local Union's Community Services Committee, members can make decisions about the best way to cover their needs, and the Union will determine whether to pay for monthly premiums or to assist in paying for health care services on an "as needed" basis. No one will ever be denied necessary health care.

HOW MUCH MONEY DOES THE CWA MEMBERS' RELIEF FUND HAVE IN IT?

The fund is extremely healthy and has over \$400 million dollars in it.

CAN I BE PERMANENTLY REPLACED WHILE ON STRIKE?

During a ULP (Unfair Labor Practice) Strike the Employer cannot permanently replace workers. During an economic strike, the employer can permanently replace workers.

WILL THE EMPLOYER PERMANENTLY REPLACE ME? DON'T THEY NEED US?

It is common practice during a hospital strike for the hospital to bring in agency employees from around the country. These workers are most likely from outside the Buffalo area and are brought in temporarily for the duration of a strike. In addition, the Hospital may replace bargaining unit employees with permanent employees if the following sequence of events occurs:

1. The Union goes out on an Economic Strike
2. During the strike, the employer hires permanent replacements
3. The Union unconditionally offers to return to work
4. Because the replacements are occupying jobs, the employer has insufficient vacancies to reinstate strikers who want to return

WHAT WOULD I DO IF I AM A DUAL STATUS EMPLOYEE AND THERE IS A STRIKE? FOR EXAMPLE I'M A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE AT MERCY HOSPITAL OF BUFFALO AND I WORK PER DIEM AT KENMORE MERCY.

If you work at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo and there is a strike, you will be on strike. That would not prevent you from working your hours as a per diem employee at Kenmore Mercy or prevent you from seeking employment at another hospital if you need to work.



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DESCRIBE THE PROCESS FOR VOTING ON (RATIFICATION OF) A CONTRACT?

There are eight (8) separate CWA contracts within Catholic Health.

- Kenmore Mercy Hospital - RNs
- Kenmore Mercy Hospital - Technical
- Kenmore Mercy Hospital - Service & Clerical
- Mercy Hospital - RNs
- Mercy Hospital - STC
- Sisters of Charity Hospital-St. Joseph Campus – RNs
- Sisters of Charity Hospital-St. Joseph Campus – Service & Technical

There will be two (2) pieces to every contract, Common Language that will be the same language for all eight (8) contracts and then Bargaining Unit Language that will cover issues specific to each bargaining unit.

Each bargaining unit WILL VOTE ON THEIR OWN CONTRACT.

EXAMPLES: MERCY NURSES WILL NOT VOTE ON ANY OTHER CONTRACT EXCEPT THEIR OWN CONTRACT. ST. JOE'S SERVICE WILL ONLY VOTE ON THEIR OWN CONTRACT, ETC.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF ONE OF THE BARGAINING UNITS THAT CANNOT STRIKE VOTES THEIR CONTRACT DOWN?

If a majority of members from one or all of the bargaining units decide to vote no, the first thing we always do when a contract is voted down is to talk to the members and find out why they voted no. Then we will attempt to meet with Catholic Health to see if there is any additional room for movement.

THE UNION'S GOAL WILL BE TO TRY AND FIX THE ISSUE AND GET THE CONTRACT BACK TO THE MEMBERS FOR ANOTHER RATIFICATION VOTE. OUR POWER IS IN NUMBERS, SO UNITING THE 8 BARGAINING TEAMS BRINGS US OUR MAXIMUM LEVERAGE IN NEGOTIATING.

QUESTIONS? FOR MERCY AND KENMORE MEMBERS CALL LOCAL 1133 AT (716) 828-1133 AND ST. JOES MEMBERS CALL LOCAL 1168 AT (716) 639-1168.

