



Berkshire Health Systems, Inc.

725 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 447-2000

February 23, 2018

Dear BHS Community:

As you all know, we were fully prepared for the Massachusetts Nurses Association's second strike against Berkshire Medical Center, which was scheduled to begin next Tuesday, February 27. Fewer than 5 months have passed since the union's first walkout in October 2017.

Because it has always been our desire to find a reasonable and mutually agreeable conclusion to our negotiations, we offered our nurses a comprehensive, fair contract package long ago and have made favorable adjustments to it over the last many months. At yesterday's bargaining session, we made one last effort to bring the contract negotiations to a satisfactory end by presenting a very significant offer. Please refer to the employee portal or BMCNurses.com for full details. Please note that based on the financial impact of a strike, this is a time-limited offer.

In summary, we offered the following:

We offered language promising to not change the RN staffing grids in a way that would increase the number of patients assigned to RNs between now and our proposed end date of the new contract. We also have offered language making it clear that Clinical Team Leaders and Permanent Charge Nurses generally would not be expected to take a patient assignment except (i) where it is the current practice for charge nurses to take an assignment, or (ii) under limited circumstances such as changes in patient census or unplanned RN absences. In circumstances where they are asked to take a patient assignment, we have offered to limit the duration and number of those assignments to only the extent necessary to meet immediate patient needs. If accepted, our offers would result in the first staffing language we have agreed to insert into any of our labor contracts. We believe these proposals meet, as closely as we reasonably can, two interests that the union has expressed often over the past 17 months. First, that clinical team leaders and charge nurses not be given patient assignments and, second, that nurses not be asked to take on more patients than they are currently expected to take. Although we cannot agree to the rigid proposals that the union has put forth in these areas since they would prevent the Medical Center from responding appropriately and in a timely fashion to evolving and unexpected patient needs, we believe that our offers are reasonable responses to their staffing concerns. That is especially true since, under our current practice, CTL assignments rarely occur, few Permanent Charge nurses take patient assignments, and we have expressed no intent to modify the staffing grids. We fully expect that adding patient assignments to CTLs and to the charge nurses who presently do not take patient assignments will continue to be rare and short-term occurrences, based only on unanticipated volume surges or nursing staff call outs.

Although the union rarely talks about the wage and benefit package in our offer, choosing instead to focus on staffing issues, our offer has either met or met at least halfway much of the union's wage, shift differentials and other compensation demands. In addition, with now only 19 months left in the contract period about which we are negotiating, we have proposed to add

another year to the contract—out to September 2020—and included in that additional year additional, significant financial enhancements.

We are pleased to have an offer to our nurses that rewards them for their contributions, maintains competitive wages for them and does so in a way that is sustainable for the Medical Center and the community that we serve. We have agreed to additional dates for negotiations and we look forward to final settlement of a fair contract with our nurses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick M. Borek', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Patrick M. Borek
Vice President, Human Resources