

## Bargaining update

On Monday, April 21 our bargaining team met with management's group (including Kathy McNutt and other representatives of Sutter Care at Home and Sutter Human Resources) for a second bargaining session. The tone was cordial and productive.

Although we didn't reach any firm agreements on contract language, we exchanged thoughts and concerns about some key issues, outlining our respective positions. We settled an agenda for our next meeting, and both

sides agreed to present proposals in key areas.

Rather than meet again on April 28 to bargain, we set aside that date for working sessions on each side. We will meet to bargain again on May 5, and we are looking forward to rolling up our sleeves and making progress.

Our bargaining team has called for a meeting of our entire group for 8:30 am on Monday.

The meeting location is Mark's house at 2411 Begonia Place, Santa Cruz.

Major goals for this session

include developing consensus on how we want to use the issue of seniority in our contract, and what the position of Lead Therapist has been historically and currently within the Santa Cruz VNA.

### **Our bargaining team:**

Gaye Kihorany  
Deborah Marks  
Melody Newcombe  
Frank Wosfeld

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## What does seniority mean in a union contract?

The definition of seniority is: "an employee's status determined by length of continuous employment used to determine which employees should secure advantages at the workplace (e.g. promotion, shift assignment, or layoff survival), and to measure employee entitlement to benefits."

At the onset of the American Labor Movement, workers fought for basic workplace justice. They frequently tried to force their employers to follow impartial rules: wages that were based on jobs rather than unfair manipulation of piece rates; promotions and layoffs based on

seniority rather than managerial favoritism and discrimination. This was a way of introducing civil rights into the workplace – requiring that management be conducted by rule rather than by arbitrary decision. Over time these efforts resulted in collective bargaining agreements that set down rules for awarding pay increases, conducting layoffs, promotions or other means of choosing between otherwise equal members of the workforce for benefit or disadvantage. Today seniority rights are central to most union contracts, along with just cause protections against

arbitrary firings or discipline, uniform pay increases, benefit guarantees and grievance procedures for resolving disputes.

At our meeting next Monday we want to discuss how we want to apply seniority within our group – where does strict seniority make sense, when should we modify it, where might we want to use a more equity-based method like rotation.

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