Yesterday, we had our first negotiations of the new year and are happy to report progress. For the first time in months, we received an updated Health and Welfare Benefits proposal from management. Their new proposal includes significant movement toward some of our key demands around health benefits, particularly with regard to health plans. Management’s proposal has some issues, so we are preparing a counterproposal to bring to our next session on January 23.

Last month, we approved a new Continuing Education benefit that will give those of us with license/certification requirements substantial annual funds and paid education leave to complete those requirements. This victory, and the progress on health benefits, is clearly a result of our strike in November — and our ability to win further victories will depend on continuing to show to management we are united for a fair contract.

We discussed wages, PTO, and retirement, and will revisit them all at our next session. We were joined by a mediator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services. The mediator has no actual authority in bargaining, but helps to coordinate negotiations.

You may have seen notices like the one pictured from the National Labor Relations Board put up around the hospital. As we shared last month, the NLRB found Queen in violation of federal labor law for refusing to recognize our union, refusing to bargain with us, making unilateral changes to our working conditions without bargaining, and denying our requests to have union representation in investigatory meetings. These postings are meant to be a reminder of our rights and includes a list of actions the Queen must take in order to make up for their illegal behavior, and we encourage everyone take the time to read and spread the word about them.

Our next bargaining session will take place on Thursday, January 23 beginning at 10 A.M. We will follow up with the location as soon as it is confirmed. All members are encouraged to attend.

For more information, please contact NUHW Organizer Tyler Kissinger at (510) 883-3479 or tkissinger@nuhw.org.