

**RICHMOND AREA MULTI-SERVICES (RAMS)**

**WHO ARE THE WORKERS?**

NUHW represents 105 mental health workers at Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS) who provide community-based mental health care through contracts with San Francisco’s Department of Public Health and other county departments. Their first contract expired in December of 2020, and now, in the middle of a pandemic that has put heavy stress on mental health providers, RAMS NUHW members have not received a raise in nearly two years and are in negotiations for their second collective bargaining agreement with RAMS management. The pandemic has increased the need for community-based mental health services, while RAMS struggles to retain clinicians because their pay lags behind therapists at other providers.

- Fifty-three of NUHW RAMS members live in San Francisco, while others commute to San Francisco from as far away as San Jose.
- On average, NUHW RAMS members have worked at the organization for four and a half years, with four employees having worked at RAMS for more than 20 years.
- Workers’ median hourly wage rate is \$26.87. The lowest wage rate is \$21.22, for a Case Manager/Outreach Worker. At RAMS, the average hourly rate earned by licensed mental health clinicians is \$30.60, \$14 dollars less per hour than licensed mental health clinicians who are direct employees of SFDPH, even though they are paid by some of the same sources of funding.<sup>1</sup>

**BARGAINING UPDATE**

RAMS NUHW members began bargaining their second contract in October of 2020. To date, we have reached Tentative Agreement on 16 Articles, and members have already won improved language around Bereavement Leave and are making progress toward a more transparent visa and Green Card application process. However, management refuses to move on a number of open noneconomic issues:

- Management refuses to extend a Professional Exemption to RAMS NUHW members who already meet the salary test for exempt status.
- Management wants to introduce anti-union Union Shop language that memorializes workers’ ability to become non-union Beck objectors, who pay less than the full amount of union dues.
- Management wants to retain control over member participation in hiring committees for managers and supervisors, and wants to have discretion over disciplinary records kept on file, even after 18 months’ time.

Once we reach agreement on noneconomic issues, we will propose an aggressive but attainable wage proposal that will bring RAMS-NUHW workers closer in line with wage rates for mental health city workers and workers at other nonprofits in San Francisco.

**RAMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

RAMS NUHW members have continued serving their clients, residents, and community without interruption throughout the course of the COVID-19 crisis. Workers at Broderick Street Adult Residential Facility have continued offering 24/7 care to 33 residents impacted by mental and physical illness. Workers in RAMS CAAP Counseling and Pre-Vocational Services were deployed to San Francisco’s Shelter-in-Place hotels early in the pandemic, and are now serving telehealth deployments for many vulnerable members of the San Francisco community. All RAMS workers continue to provide virtual and limited in-person services, including clinicians in RAMS Wellness Centers Program, which serves SFUSD students. RAMS NUHW members have observed an increased need for mental health services because of the pandemic.

**ABOUT NATIONAL UNION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

Founded in 2009, NUHW is the nation’s fastest growing healthcare union, representing 15,000 mental health clinicians, nurses, nursing assistants, medical technicians, clerks, and service workers. NUHW mental health clinicians are leading the fight to end the stigma surrounding mental illness, to provide better access to care, and to enforce mental health parity rules so that patients get the treatment they need when they need it.

1. “Step 1” SFDPH Behavioral Health Clinicians earns \$44.44 hourly as of 12/26/20.