



# UNION UPDATE

UAW Local 2322  
4 Open Square Way  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
www.uaw2322.org

UAW Local 2322

Providence Hospital

March 27, 2020

## Dear UAW Local 2322/Providence Organized Workers (POW) Member

We wanted to reach out with some news and to encourage you to be in touch as we make our way through this unprecedented national crisis.

\*While we recognize that there are national shortages of PPE, we have raised concerns with management about scarce, unevenly available sanitizer and PPE in the building. As a result of our efforts, earlier this week, management announced it is dropping its ban on personally supplied masks.

\*We have been raising concerns with management as members have brought them to us about various other issues (what's being done with a potentially symptomatic patient on OAU; is management reducing staff on Detox, are MMPT clinicians classified as "non-essential workers" by the State). Please contact one of us or your steward with issues and we will try to get answers.

### \*CLOSURE UPDATE:

As you know, at the end of February, Trinity announced it had filed a 120-day notice with the Department of Public Health of its intent to close the psych units at Providence Hospital. The next step in the process would be a 90-day notice (due by the end of March) which would trigger scheduling by DPH of a public hearing to determine if the affected services are "essential." Unfortunately, the DPH has no real power to force Trinity to keep the units open even if they are deemed "essential," though a bill is in the MA legislature now that would put real teeth into the law.

By law, management must give the Union and members at least 60 days notice of actual layoffs, so we do not expect notices until toward the end of April. The new contract incorporates the process for bumping that was negotiated during the CHAD layoffs two years ago.

On March 13, the bargaining committee met with management to begin "impact bargaining" over the closure. Management explained efforts they were planning—"talent acquisition" sessions for members interested in being considered for other jobs in the Trinity system, and trainings on resume writing and interviewing. We proposed severance and "stay-pay" which management declined to entertain at that time. We agreed to meet again on April 2 to continue the discussion.

Shortly after, all hell broke loose with the COVID-19 pandemic. It now seems increasingly clear that Trinity cannot reasonably move forward with its plans. The DPH cannot hold a public hearing when all in-person gatherings have been banned. And it would be reckless and immoral to eliminate 60-80 psych beds when hospitals and emergency rooms are overrun with COVID-19 patients. Last week, we wrote to call on Trinity to put a moratorium on its plans for at least for the next 3 to 4 months, so that the affected workers, patients and families do not have this hanging over their heads in the midst of this massive public health crisis. Management has not given us an answer. We will see if they file their 90-day notice and keep everyone posted on next steps if they do.

Please stay positive, stay safe, take care of your families, yourselves and each other. Reach out if you need help and we will do our best to support one another.

In Solidarity,

Michelle Reardon  
POW Chair  
Vice-President, UAW Local 2322  
413-378-0562  
michelle.reardon@uaw2322.org

Karen Rosenberg  
UAW Local 2322 Servicing Rep  
401-465-6523  
karen@uaw2322.org