



STAND UP SONOMA COUNTY

The Official News Source of SEIU 1021 Sonoma County Contract Negotiations

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Now the Hard Work Begins

Last week, we had our 8th negotiating session with the County. It was a disappointing session, beginning with their healthcare proposal.

The quotes we have received from the insurance companies show Sutter requested an increase of around 5% while Kaiser requested a whopping 12% increase! The County's proposal ties healthcare contributions to the HMO with the most enrollees (currently Sutter) and sets the maximum county contribution at the current cost-sharing ratio of that plan for the first 2 years (100% of Sutter HMO cost contributed by the County). For the second two years the County proposed to pick up an additional 3% of any increases to the Sutter plan with members paying increases above 3%.

Besides the disappointing healthcare proposal, the County officially rejected our proposals for State Disability Insurance (SDI), dual parent healthcare coverage, and fixes to their broken classification study process. In addition, the County proposed changes to the current Domestic Partnership policy that would result in far fewer members qualifying for this status and the associated benefits while presenting it as nothing more than a change to clean up contract language. This was disappointing to say the least.

The County has clearly expressed it is their interest to secure a long-term contract. Although such a deal could be beneficial for both sides, it also raises concerns for how this may impact the County's current process for reviewing and updating job classifications, including salary. To address this concern we proposed a mechanism to review every job classification and raise salary to market equity over a period of 5 years. The County was not interested in this proposal at all, although did agree to "think about ideas" to address equity over a multi-year deal; we're not quite sure what that means yet.

Your team's package of proposals was created to give long-term stability to workers by fixing many of the ongoing problems within the County. High turnover and staff shortages mean city services suffer, short-changing our residents and putting our most vulnerable population at risk. In this session we saw that the county doesn't seem to think many of these issues are important. If we want a package that will move us into a secure and sustainable future we are going to have to show them we mean business!

Be ready to go in January when we take actions to the worksites and to County Center!

In Solidarity,
Your Bargaining Team