

98% of Striking Butler Caregivers Vote to Reject Management's Latest "Last, Best and Final Offer"

"No one can afford to survive in this economy for less than \$20 an hour."

Sean Seery, Nutrition Associate

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - Yesterday, hundreds of Butler Hospital workers cast their votes on management's revised "last, best, and final offer" after evaluating whether it meets their demands for family-sustaining wages, affordable healthcare, and safer working conditions. In response, an overwhelming majority of union caregivers voted to reject the offer and are working on next steps to improve safety, working standards and quality of care.

Youtube

<https://youtube.com/embed/qvDZFw50RM>

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Here is a breakdown of why Butler members voted to reject management's revised "last, best, final offer."

Wages - Butler's plan offers the lowest paid workers in dietary, clerical, and housekeeping only \$18 an hour start rate. \$18 an hour for a 40 hour work week is only \$37,440 a year - before taxes and deductions. The average rent in Rhode Island is \$1,800 a month for a one bedroom, which comes out to \$21,600 a year. With gas at roughly \$3 a gallon, an individual filling up their tank once a week to commute could spend up to \$2,340-\$3,120 a year. Nearly two thirds of their yearly income would be used to cover housing and gas alone, not including all the other costs of daily living. Instead, Butler caregivers are calling for a wage scale that recognizes longevity and seeks to retain current staff. Currently management's proposal does nothing to help bring recognition to years of service at the hospital.

Healthcare - Management's plan would substantially raise the deductibles that workers must pay for the HSA healthcare plan, putting individuals who have chronic health conditions or already cash-strapped members at risk of medical debt. In comparison, the union's proposal would increase cost sharing of the plan in an affordable way protecting workers from the full burden of the changes the employer seeks to implement.

Safety- Butler's proposed workplace safety task force and assistance plan adopts some of the workers' recommendations. However, the employer is seeking to eliminate the practice that people who are on workmans' compensation can return to their same position even after a year of service. This would mean that many employees who are injured due to workplace violence would have to reapply to their positions and, only if rehired, would they keep their seniority and current wage.

I have worked in the Dietary Department for 14 years. We don't just give our patients healthy meals, we give them back a sense of choice and normalcy. Yet Butler treats dietary staff and other low paid workers like we are just units. That we don't matter. Not only that, we are constantly working short. Mary Marran says she is so proud of her last best final offer but for us it is a slap to the face. The 16% raise she is offering equals less than 80 cents an hour for some of us. Combined with the higher healthcare costs this actually moves us backward. No one can afford to survive in this economy for less than \$20 an hour, especially if you have kids. That is why I am voting no on this offer."

Sean Seery, Nutrition Associate

Due to excessive heat warnings, the strike line ended today at 11AM. Contact 1199NE Comms at comms@seiu1199ne.org or (860)280-6443 to arrange for a worker interview.

MEDIA CONTACT

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ABOUT SEIU 1199NE

District 1199 SEIU New England represents 29,000 health care and service workers in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Southeastern Massachusetts. In Rhode Island, 1199 SEIU NE represents almost 5,000 members. 1199 SEIU NE is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) - a union of over 2 million members across the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. SEIU has been a national leader in pushing the growing Fight for \$15 and a Union movement.