

**YOUR BARGAINING TEAM RECOMMENDS A “YES” VOTE!**

**WSNA/ BENTON FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT CONTRACT  
GENERAL SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS**

**March 19, 2024**

Your bargaining team is pleased to announce that we have a tentative agreement for a new contract! There are numerous increases in premiums and wages and improvements in working conditions. We secured historic wage increases in our ongoing efforts to ensure that nurses at the District are fairly compensated.

**TERM:** 2 years. Contract will expire on December 31, 2025.

**WAGES:** **Effective 1/1/24 (retroactive):** Steps A and B will be eliminated, and the current step C will become the new step A. The rest of the wage scale will be shifted accordingly. Additionally, the entire wage scale will be increased by 5%. This means that nurses at steps A through G will receive about a 15.8% wage increase, and nurses at steps H through K will receive about a 13% wage increase.

**Effective 1/1/25.** Step A will be eliminated, and the current step B will become the new step A. The wage scale through step K will be shifted accordingly. Additionally, the entire wage scale shall be increased by 2%. This means that all nurses will receive about a 7% wage increase.

**PREMIUMS, BENEFITS AND OTHER COMPENSATION:**

**Medical Insurance Premiums.** Currently, some employees pay a little more than 15% of the employee only premium and a little more than 20% of the employee plus dependent premium. We have changed the language so that employees will pay no more than 15% for the employee only premium and no more than 20% for the employee plus dependent premium. Some employees may see a small reduction in their insurance premiums in the pay period after ratification as a result.

**Longevity Pay.** A new level of longevity pay will be implemented for nurses with six years of longevity and will be paid at the rate of \$25 per month.

**Recognition for Past Experience.** Currently, new hires are given only one year of credit for every two years of experience, up to a maximum of step C. Now, nurses will get one year of credit for every year of public health experience or relevant nursing experience, with no cap. Additionally, currently employed nurses who did not receive full credit upon their hire will have their step placements adjusted upon request and verification.

**Paid Holidays.** Juneteenth has been added as a paid holiday recognized in the contract.

**Sick Leave.** New language stating that a nurse may not be required to give sick leave notice on the first day of absence if it is impracticable to do so. In the event it is impracticable for a nurse to provide notice, a person on the nurse's behalf may provide notice. Also, new language that prohibits the District from requiring proof of illness for absences of three days or less.

**Employee Assistance Program.** The current contract allows the District to eliminate the Employee Assistance Program. We secured new language requiring the District to maintain the program with no

less than 10% of the level of benefits as provided as of January 1, 2023.

**Reimbursement for Vehicle Repairs.** The District will now provide up to \$200 every two years for personal vehicle maintenance and repairs to those employees who have driven at least 1000 miles on approved business within the previous or current calendar year, subject to the submittal of proper documentation.

**Local Unit Officer Training.** Each year one local unit officer shall be provided up to four hours of release time without loss of pay to participate in training programs sponsored by WSNA.

**Bilingual Certification Premium.** Nurses who demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the District, the ability to communicate in a foreign language by completing a bilingual fluency assessment (Tier 1) will be eligible to receive \$80 per month as premium pay, in addition to their base salary. Nurses who successfully obtain certification for fluency in another language (Tier 2) will continue to receive a premium of \$160 per month.

#### **OTHER ISSUES:**

**Safety Committee.** New language requiring that workplace violence be a topic of the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee shall review all incidents of workplace violence. A bargaining unit employee chosen by the Association shall be a member of the Safety Committee and shall be paid at their regular rate of pay for all time spent in committee meetings.

**Nondiscrimination.** New language prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and veteran's status.

**WA Cares Act.** The WA Cares Act requires that employers provide long-term care insurance for employees with both the employer and employees contributing to the cost through payroll deduction. We have modified the contract to include language consistent with this requirement.

**Program Orientation and Training.** New language requiring orientation and training to be provided to new hires and transfers. The orientation must consist of goal-directed education and training that includes the knowledge and skills required by the specific program. It must include a combination of formalized instruction and practical work experiences. Newly hired and transferred nurses shall not be required to perform procedures for which they have not received training and orientation to allow them to perform the assignment or task safely and independently. Necessary equipment must be provided so that nurses can work safely. The District and WSNA will work collaboratively to develop an orientation and training program within 90 days of ratification.

**Grievance Procedure.** New language requiring that the District administrator meet with the grievant and an Association representative before responding in writing to the grievance.

**Vacation Record-Keeping.** New language requiring that each employee have access to current levels of vacation and sick leave accrual on the online employee portal.