

Central and Mares Campus**Survey: Your Input Matters**

After over two years of bargaining, nurses at Confluence Health's Mares Campus are steps away from joining their colleagues at the Central Campus to form a single unified registered nurse bargaining unit. As we sort through this situation, nurse input is more important than ever.

As a quick refresher, we shared a summary of the memorandum of understanding covering how joining the Mares and Central campuses would work at the beginning of the month. The MOU would include two kinds of proposed changes: terms that apply to all nurses at both campuses and terms that address the issues that are specific to just Mares Campus nurses.

The summary is posted on the WSNA website but here's a shortcut: <https://tinyurl.com/ConfluenceSummary>

SURVEY DETAILS:

Please complete this important and **BRIEF** survey to share your feedback about 3 key areas:

1. How should seniority be handled?
2. Your thoughts on Central and Mares Campus joining under a single contract
3. The terms and benefits of the MOU

The link to the survey will be emailed and texted to folks today. It will also be posted on the WSNA website.

Observations from a Uniquely Up-Close Perspective

There's been conversation from a distance about the potential changes and impact in theory of a joint bargaining unit. But we wondered what a nurse who is experiencing this from a front row seat had to say. Meet Sharelle. She was a PCU nurse at Central covered by our WSNA contract. Now she's an oncology infusion nurse at Central, also still covered by our WSNA contract—AND it just so happens that her work is at Mares Campus.

"Central was the first place I ever encountered a union. I worked PCU for 7 years and now, I work in oncology infusion for the last 2 years. I feel very fortunate to have a union that will back me in pay negotiations as well as safety needs of nurses and patients. I know as a nurse at Central the impression was the Mares nurses had it easy. My response to that now is: it is not easy, less stressful for the most part and definitely a different skill set. The high stress and constant coverage of 24-7 care is a lot. IF the Mares campus nurses were not there, Central nurses would have so much more work. Mares deserves the coverage of WSNA as they work very hard to keep patients safe and out of the hospital. Our highest priority is the patient."

- Sharelle Smith, RN, Central, Infusion Nurse, at Mares Campus



Megan Baute (left) GI nurse, Mares Campus with Sharelle Smith (right) Oncology Infusion nurse, Central Campus (at Mares Campus)

Info Sessions

Thanks to everyone who attended the info sessions last week for the great discussions. But we bet folks still have questions! We want to make sure that all nurses have an opportunity to ask questions and gain the perspective of WSNA attorneys who have been at the negotiating table at both Central and Mares. We will be holding in person and virtual meetings to give everyone ample access to the information. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Friday 12/19/25

In-Person/Virtual Meetings Via Teams

10-11am Central—CRJ

12-1pm Mares

CR WVHC Basement

Links to virtual meetings coming soon by text and email! It will be on the WSNA website also.

Questions?

Contact our WSNA Nurse Representative:

Laurie Robinson, RN

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Central and Mares Campus Unification FAQs

Why didn't Mares Campus nurses choose to join Central's group two years ago? At the time, joining the Central unit wasn't an option for them. While WSNA met with nurses to discuss their options as Confluence became a single entity — including joining the Central bargaining unit -- Teamsters Local 760 filed a petition with the NLRB to represent the nurses as a standalone unit. As a result, the voting options available to Mares nurses were (1) to be represented as a standalone unit by Teamsters, (2) to be represented as a standalone unit by WSNA, or (3) to remain unrepresented. In that election, nurses voted to be represented by WSNA.

What is the process Mares would use to join the Central unit now? The process for adding a new group to an existing bargaining unit is called a "self-determination election," because it happens when a group of unrepresented workers feels that they share common goals, duties, and working conditions — called a "community of interest" — with an existing unit and want to join it. Typically the process includes collecting membership cards from workers in the new group and requesting that the employer agree to add the group to the bargaining unit of its own volition (called "voluntary recognition"). If the employer does not agree to voluntarily recognize an addition to the unit, the workers can file a petition with the NLRB for an election at which Mares nurses would vote on whether to join the Central bargaining unit. After that, we started bargaining for terms that would apply to them in a contract.

Have we ever done this before? Yes! Nurses at Central Campus have been very successful at protecting bargaining unit work for coworkers in recent years. In 2023, we added over 30 infusion RNs based at the Mares, Omak, and Moses Lake campuses to the Central bargaining unit using a self-determination election. <https://tinyurl.com/CentralInfusion> And earlier this year, we added another 5 Home Infusion RNs to the Central bargaining unit using voluntary recognition. After they were added to the unit, either through a certified election or voluntary recognition, we negotiated for terms that handled how the contract would apply to them and where exceptions were necessary.

Who would vote in a self-determination election? The nurses in the unrepresented group would vote to join the existing bargaining unit. For example, the Infusion RNs voted to join the Central bargaining unit. If management did not agree to recognize Mares' addition to the bargaining unit, Mares nurses would have the opportunity to vote to join through the NLRB's processes. If management either voluntarily recognizes Mares or the Mares nurses vote to join the Central bargaining unit, they would immediately become members of the Central bargaining unit.

Who would vote on a Mares MOU? After we are either voluntarily recognized or the Mares addition is certified by the NLRB, we would bargain over terms for their addition to the bargaining unit, just like we did last year for Infusion nurses and this year for Home Infusion nurses. After we reach an agreement with management, all nurses in the Central bargaining unit — including current Central nurses and newly-added Mares nurses — would qualify to vote on the terms of that MOU as long as they were members in good standing of WSNA.