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Sent on: Monday, August 21, 2023 6:30:24 PM

To: GMCB - Health Systems Finances<GMCB.HealthSystemsFinances@vermont.gov>; Bredice, Tara<Tara.Bredice@vermont.gov>; LaJeunesse, Kristen<Kristen.Lajeunesse@vermont.gov>

Subject: Public Comment: Hospital Budget 2023-08-21T18:30:23Z

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 8/21/2023 6:30:23 PM

Name: Bridget McNamara

Affiliation:

Town/City:

Topic: Hospital Budget

Comment: I am begging for livable wages for the essential workers at UVMMC who keep the hospital functioning. I am employed full time and I qualify for financial support in paying my medical bills with the insurance supplied by this hospital. The support staff in this hospital allow for the amazing nurses, PAs, doctors, technicians, PTs, OTs, dieticians, psychologists, social workers, radiologists, and so many more to do their job in a safe and clean environment. We have no hospital without our patient support team, or registration representatives, or environmental service staff, or sterile reprocessing staff, and despite their critical role, many struggle to make ends meet and even more need second jobs to keep up with rising rents, increases in food costs, and overall cost of living increases. The union is proposing resources for staff to take additional time off after being assaulted by patients without draining their CTO. As a mental health technician who works closely with patients in crisis and on substances, I have seen my fair share of gruesome attacks on staff and at the present moment, we are not supported in our recovery. Just a few weeks ago, a coworker of mine was knocked to the floor, punched in the face, and strangled by a patient and had to use their own CTO to take the next night off to physically and emotionally recover from the ordeal. My coworkers have suffered concussions, broken noses, broken arms, broken orbital bones, stabbings, lacerations, contusions, and the emotional trauma of assault in the context of trying to provide care to people in need. We need a system in place to address the assault crisis and support our colleagues who have suffered these egregious crimes. I want to commend the hospital for the steps that have been taken, because they have made strides to increase safety and it is a good start. They have installed a magnetometer in the Emergency Department and a clear bag policy to identify prohibited items and it has been very successful in creating a safer environment. The next step is to support our colleagues after an assault takes place, and that is to allow time to process the events without forcing a person to use their CTO. Overall, the main concern of most employees is money. There are steps management can take to improve access to counseling services or support healthy living, but every initiative is useless if someone is struggling to make rent or buy food. If I did not have a savings from my previous job, I would be in more dire straights, and I need to pick up urgent or overtime at least once a week to be financially sound. Please listen to our stories and understand how important it is to support the support staff and allow us to make a living wage.

Post Comment: Yes