

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 8/25/2023

Name: Heather Bauman

Affiliation:

Town/City:

Topic: Hospital Budget

Comment:

Good morning. My name is Heather Bauman, I am a phlebotomist at UVMMC, and a member of the hospital's newest union, Support Staff United. Our union formed back in January of this year and we have been in negotiations with the UVMMC Administration since May.

You have no doubt seen the 118 comments submitted to the board by staff from UVMMC. They came from members of our bargaining unit.

As you read through them, I'm sure you got the gist. As a group we are not paid livable wages. We struggle to make rent and to afford groceries. Many of us cannot access care through the health insurance that the Medical Center offers, due to the high out of pocket costs.

Most Wednesdays— before or after our regular shifts, instead of spending time with our families or getting some rest, hundreds of us gather in person and on zoom at the bargaining table to work on bettering these conditions. We are proposing changes that would bring our wages up and make healthcare more affordable for the thousands of Vermonters in our bargaining unit.

I appreciate that Dr Leffler said today that, "we need to pay our people well."

But so far, in bargaining, the administration has been unwilling to join our efforts to make sure that the support staff is earning a livable wage and has access to affordable health care.

We understand that traditionally the board doesn't get into the weeds on how, specifically, the medical center spends its money, but we are here to implore you: please, take a closer look. We are asking you to help ensure that the state's largest medical center, the region's level one trauma center and the largest private employer in the state, does not balance its budget on the backs of its most marginalized and lowest paid staff.

There are more than 2,000 people in the Support Staff United union and we are the backbone of the University of Vermont Medical Center. For far too long we have been an afterthought.

I am here today representing our union and you have heard from at least another hundred of my colleagues— I am speaking up, we are speaking up, because we are no longer willing to accept being an afterthought. It is time that the people who power UVMMC are a priority. We are the hospital's most valuable resource, and the budget should reflect that.

I am proud to be a member of a large team that provides our community with excellent care, and I appreciate that Dr Eappen stated UVMMC's commitment to "providing care to everyone who walks through the door." I just wish that promise extended to those of us who come in through the employees' entrance.

Post Comment: Yes