



State Contract Update

For all Connecticut state employee members of the New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199 ■ April 2005

Real Progress in Job Security, Staff Recruitment, Fairness at Work

No Concessions, But Some Disappointments

Inside are details on our tentative new 1199 State Employee Contract, negotiated by the 100+ elected members of the Negotiating Committee. Issues where we couldn't reach an agreement with the State were decided by an outside arbitrator.

"Job security was ranked THE #1 priority in last fall's Contract Survey," says Theresa Taylor, SMRW in DMR-South. **"And we won contracting-out protections for part-timers, and job security in the fast-changing DMR and DMHAS agencies. It's a positive feeling to know management can't treat our work with disrespect like they have before."**



We were not able to win everything we wanted, such as on wages, on-call compensation, or a risk bonus for caregivers working with violent patients.

"These issues are important and we spoke up, even though we knew we might not win it all," says Charles Oxley, DCF lead child service worker. **"But people are getting hurt, so the fight will continue until we win."**



TAKE ACTION!

**Tell Your Legislator:
"1199 Contract - Vote YES!"**

Our new contract must be approved by the State Legislature before it can go into effect July 1st. Call your state senator & representative now and urge them to vote 'YES' for our contract.

Don't know your legislator? No problem! Use your address to look up your legislators' name and phone number at 1199's website www.nehceu.org

Questions? Call your organizer or Negotiating Rep
— names & numbers at www.nehceu.org

"Fair is fair. I didn't think it was right for the State to treat part-time workers different from full-timers. But our new contract helps make sure everyone is treated equally."



— Adem Vinca,
Mental Retardation Worker, DMR West

JOB SECURITY

✓ Expand Contracting-Out Protection for Part-Timers

Under our old contract, our nearly 2,000 part-time employees could be laid off if the State decided to send out work to a private company. Now NO permanent employee, full-time or part-time, can be laid off as a direct consequence of contracting out. [Article 6]

✓ Job Security in DMR, DMHAS

As the State shifts to community-based programs, workers at existing institutions have faced disappearing jobs. Now all permanent DMR and DMHAS employees hired on or before July 1, 2005 are guaranteed transfers and re-training to other positions in the agency if the workforce is reallocated or reduced.

Sign Up for 1199 E-UPDATES

Get updates and action alerts about our contract, issues on the job, and union events via email. Sign up at:

www.nehceu.org



WAGES

	<i>Wage Increase</i>	<i>Annual Increment</i>
YEAR 1	0%	No AI
YEAR 2	3%	On Time
YEAR 3	3%	On Time
YEAR 4	3%	On Time

(Year 1 starts July 1, 2005, Year 2 July 1, 2006...)

Several other state employee unions had agreed to or received in arbitration 0% wage increase and no AI in the first year. This set a difficult pattern to break. But we are now the only union so far to win AIs on time in Years 2, 3, and 4.

✓ Step Increases for Dentists

In our last contract, dentists were the ONLY classification who didn't win any step increases. Two steps will now be added to the Dentist pay scale. [Article 9]

COMPENSATION

✓ Automatic Payout of Comp Time

Many people are piling up lots of comp time, but rarely get to use it. Now, if you are not allowed OR unable (new!) to use your comp time, then the Agency must automatically pay it out within the fourth month after you earned it. [Article 13]

✓ Premium Holiday Pay for All

Previously, at most worksites, only employees *required* to work a premium holiday received time-and-a-half pay. *Volunteers* only received straight time. Now all employees working on a premium holiday will receive time-and-a-half for all hours worked on the day, plus the usual comp day. [Article 21, Section 3]

✓ **Timely Travel Reimbursements**

Many of us have months' worth of mileage waiting to be reimbursed. New contract language will now require the State to pay travel reimbursements within 60 days. [Article 31, new Section 3]

✓ **DMR: Pay for Travel Time**

Those who go from one worksite to another for overtime will now be paid for travel time, up to 1 hour.

✓ **Personal Leave for Part-Timers**

Now PT employees who work 17.5 hours or more (was 20 hours) will receive pro-rated three personal days with pay. [Article 20, Section 2]

✓ **Option to Increase Hours, Pay**

OT & PT Supervisors, Pharmacists, Pharmacy Consultants and Supervisors, OT2s, PT2s, Physician's Assistants, Speech/Communication Therapists and Therapy Supervisors, RT Supervisors 1 & 2 (difficult to recruit and retain) will have the option to voluntarily increase work schedules from 35 to 37.5 or from 37.5 to 40 hrs/week in 2005 and from 37.5 to 40 hours in 2006 — equal to a \$6,000—\$14,000 pay increase. [Article 9]

✓ **DMHAS: Fair Accruals**

People working 72-72-80 schedules will now accrue sick leave and vacation at 7.5 hours/month (an increase from 7.)

✓ **DOC: Increased meal allowance**

Members working in prisons and jails don't get to leave for food. The meal allowance will go up from \$5 to \$8 per shift.



"The State was shortchanging people working a 72-72-80 schedule. But now an age-old injustice has finally been corrected."

— Michele Daniels, Mental Health Assistant 2, DMHAS CT Valley Hospital

On-Call/Standby Pay

- Although the arbitrator ruled against our proposal to change to one hour's pay for every four hours on-call, those on-call (excluding physicians) will go up to \$1.50/hr. and \$3.00/hr. on holidays in 2005, and \$1.65/\$3.50 in 2006 — a 30% increase. [Article 9, Section 8(B)]

- UCHC techs will receive on-call pay of \$3.00/hr. in 2006, \$4.00 in 2007.

✗ Arbitrator ruled against our proposal that on-call workers responding to phone calls should be paid starting at the beginning of the call. Pay will continue to begin after 15 minutes into the call.

✗ Risk Bonus

Arbitrator ruled against our proposal that caregivers working with violent patients or former inmates in select high-risk facilities deserve a 10% risk bonus.

✗ Overtime Cap

Arbitrator ruled against our proposal to raise overtime cap to pay grade 28.

FAIRNESS ON THE JOB

✓ Fixing the Grievance Backlog

The State has dragged its heels when dealing with grievances — refusing to find time to resolve problems, leaving people in limbo for months. Now each agency must set aside at least one day every month for Step 1 & 2 hearings, and management must send someone with authority to act.

✓ Ensuring Fair Service Ratings

Too often, we've been evaluated by managers not familiar with our work and who raise criticisms out-of-the-blue. Supervisors will now have to notify you in advance of your service rating about any concerns with your work and offer suggestions on how it can be fixed. And they are prohibited from adding comments after you've signed the service rating, and must give you a copy when you or your union delegate signs it. [Article 38, Section 1]

✓ Limiting Administrative Leave

State must now get permission from the Office of Labor Relations, in consultation with 1199, before it can put anyone on Administrative Leave for longer than two months. [Article 33]

✓ DMR: Fair Promotions, Transfers

When considering promotions & transfers, full-timers and part-timers with equal seniority will be treated equally.

What's an Arbitrator Got to Do with Our Contract?

Unionized state employees are barred from going on strike, so **“binding arbitration”** is used to resolve disputes with the State.

When agreements can't be reached through negotiations, both sides present **'last best offers'** on each of the remaining issues to an arbitrator (like a judge.)

The arbitrator then chooses, point by point, either 1199's or the State's offer. There is no 'compromise' solution between the two, and the arbitrator's decision is final. That's why it's **always better to take action up front** to win, rather than put our fate in the hands of an outside arbitrator.

State Statute requires the arbitrator to consider **seven factors** in deciding which offer is the 'more reasonable:'

- 1.) History of negotiations
- 2.) Existing working conditions of similar groups of employees
- 3.) Wages, benefits, and working conditions in the labor market
- 4.) Overall compensation paid to employees, including wages, overtime and premium pay, vacations, holidays and other leave, insurance, pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, food, apparel and all other benefits
- 5.) Ability of the employer to pay
- 6.) Changes in the cost of living
- 7.) Interests and welfare of employees

"The nurse recruitment and retention upgrades are a big step in the right direction!"



— Theresa Turner
Nurse Clinician, DMHAS
Bridgeport Mental
Health Center

NURSE RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

✓ Pay Upgrades

We've been fighting through the Objective Job Evaluation (OJE) process, but now these nurse classifications will receive pay upgrades in October 2005:

* *Staff, Clinical, & Correctional Nurses:*

Increase from pay grade 20 to 21

* *Forensic Nurse:*

Increase from pay grade 21 to 22

* *Clinical Nurse & Head Nurse:*

Increase from pay grade 23 to 24

* *Forensic Head Nurse:*

Increase from pay grade 24 to 25

* *Correctional Head Nurse:*

Increase from pay grade 25 to 26

✓ Clinical Nurse Coordinator and Nurse Clinicians will receive a \$2,000 bonus in October 2005, but no step increases.

✗ Arbitrator ruled against our proposal to upgrade LPNs from pay grade 18 to 19.

✓ Nurse Supervisors will now be paid for overtime at time-and-a-half of their normal hourly rate. Nurse Clinicians will now be eligible for overtime pay and shift differentials.

✓ Second- and third-shift RNs will receive \$2,500 annual 'retention' bonus beginning in 2005, and \$3,000 annual bonus starting in 2007. [Article 9, Sec. 12]

✓ Second- and third-shift LPNs will receive a \$550 annual bonus beginning in 2005, \$600 in 2007. (Arbitrator ruled against our proposal for a \$2000 bonus.)

STAFFING & TRAINING

✓ Reducing Forced Overtime in Dept. of Corrections

It's common for nurses in Correctional Managed Health Care to be mandated 3-4 times EACH week. Under a new pilot project, CMHC nurses can volunteer in advance for unfilled shifts and receive double-time pay. This doesn't fix the State's long-term staffing shortages, but it will reduce last-minute MOTs and allow nurses to plan their lives ahead of time.

✓ Increased Conference Funding

Each worker now entitled to \$1000/year (a \$250 increase) to attend professional seminars, workshops, or conferences to cover cost of fees, travel, food and lodging. [Article 35, Section 6(A)]



"Winning this Pilot Project to reduce mandatory overtime will help us get back to our real lives and our families."

— Chris Gudaitis, LPN Correctional
Managed Health Care-Cheshire

WORK SCHEDULES

✓ Moving to End Rotating Shifts

The State has been quietly creating rotating shift schedules, a band-aid approach used to cover up inadequate staffing levels. Agencies can no longer create rotating shifts and must abandon any attempts now underway. The State must meet with us in local labor-management meetings to begin to undo existing rotating shift schedules.

STRENGTHENING OUR UNION

✓ Increased Release Time for Union Service

Our locally elected delegates are taking on more responsibilities to help members file grievances, stay informed, and take action. So we've won an additional 640 hours of paid time off for union business. [Article 4, Section 7]



"Overall, we aimed for the moon and we won a lot. Now we've got to take our fight from the union hall to the halls of the State Legislature and win our contract."

— John Jarzbek, Chemist
Dept of Public Health



This brochure is a brief summary of tentative contract language. Talk to your organizer or Negotiations Representative for actual language, start dates, and additional agency- and job-specific changes.

1199 Contract Negotiating Committee

Questions? Contact your elected Negotiating Representative (names & phone numbers available at our website www.nehceu.org) or call your 1199 organizer at 860-549-1199.