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Vote Yes  
Proposal 2

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## Contracts Settled

### CMHA-CEI Reopener Settled with Biggest Raise in Years

There are three (3) Local 459 bargaining units at the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Mental Health Authority (CMHA-CEI) – one for RNs, one for Residential employees and one for all other employees (the Large unit). The approximately seven hundred (700) employees are in the middle of a five (5) year contract with reopeners in 2018 and 2019. The 2018 reopener was for wages, health care and one issue to be named by the Union. The bargaining teams chose to focus on increasing the annual longevity bonus.

In June the administration projected a \$9 million surplus for this fiscal year and a \$5.9 million budget surplus for next fiscal year. Next year's surplus estimate was later adjusted downward to \$5.1 million. This year's surplus forecast was modified to \$7 million and then about \$4 million later. With the financial picture quickly becoming less rosy as time went on, the bargaining teams pushed to get the negotiations completed. They succeeded.

The reopener settlement calls for all bargaining unit employees to receive a two percent (2%) raise in October and a one-time three and a quarter percent (3¼%) bonus in August. In addition, the bargaining team was able to negotiate an eight percent (8%) increase in the annual longevity bonuses employees with enough seniority receive. This increase was partially funded by giving back a \$18,000/year contribution to the Retiree Health Care Fund from last year's negotiations.

The agreement was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership. The Large unit voted for it 330 to 1. The Residential Unit approved it 62 to 1. The RNs unanimously ratified it 11 to 0.

The Large bargaining team was **Kelly Bernath, Erin Brady, Paul Brooks, and Jennifer Garza**, the alternate was **Kareem Baig**. The Residential team was **India Hudson, Marcus McKissic, and Dorothy Washington**. The alternates were **Vanessa Halliburton and Nick Holzwart**. **Mary Huffman** represented the RNs. The teams were assisted by Local 459 servicing staff **Naudia Fisher and Jeffrey Fleming**.

### St. Vincent Catholic Charities Employees get New Pay Scale

The employees of St. Vincent Catholic Charities (SVCC) work very hard for not a lot of pay. They take great care of troubled kids who are placed at SVCC to help get put on the right track in life.

SVCC has continually had a very high turnover rate for new employees. Management realized this was an expensive way to operate, because it costs around six-thousand (\$6,000) to train new

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Brandon Tilson, Quentin McDonald, Lance A. Rhines and Denise Fase

# Contracts Settled

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employees. They agreed that this money would be better spent by giving raises that would retain employees.

The membership were very patient and stood by the bargaining team. Having such a solid group behind a team makes all the difference. After several months of bargaining and debate, a new four (4) year contract was reached. A new pay scale was put in place that is fairer to both new and incumbent employees.

The old pay scale was set up so that it would take nine (9) years to get to the top rate. The new agreement eliminates four (4) steps and employees get top pay after five (5) years. Some employees received raises of over two-dollars (\$2.00) per hour. The new contract also adds over five-percent (5%) to the starting wage as well as to the future steps. In addition to the new step scale, employees will receive raises after they have gone beyond the five (5) year step.

This wage increase was for this year only. The parties have agreed that there will be negotiations on wages every year of the contract. This will give Local 459 a chance to continue to improve wages in the future.

The members voted unanimously to ratify the new contract. The bargaining team was Chief Steward **Brandon Tilson, Denise Fase, Quentin McDonald** and **Jessica Medrano**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.

## United Way of Genesee 3 Year Contract

The employees at the United Way of Genesee recently voted unanimously to ratify a three (3) year agreement. The new contract includes an increase to the Health Savings Accounts from \$500 to \$1,000. It also includes an increase to the 401K match as well as raises of 3%, 1% and 1%. On top of the raises, management gives employees a 2% lump sum every year to show their appreciation for their hard work.

Management also agreed to create several new "senior" positions for long term employees who were maxed out at the top of their pay scale. These positions come with a raise of over two-dollars (\$2.00) per hour.

The members agreed to pay an additional 1% in health care co-premiums per year. This will take the co-premiums from five-percent (5%) to eight-percent (8%) over the term of the agreement.

The bargaining team was **Mary Bishop** and **Janet Cotton**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.



Mary Bishop and Janet Cotton

Local 459 • On the Web: [www.local459.org](http://www.local459.org)



### 459 Update

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# Nurses Council

## Nurses Must Tell Elected Officials

Nurses all over the country are taking to the streets to protest for safe staffing ratios. Protests are happening in Florida, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Las Vegas, Texas and several right here in Michigan. In some places there are actual strikes happening.

Nurses want their hospitals to comply with safe staffing ratios and decrease the high turnover. Nurses are trying to show the communities these hospitals serve that these unsafe working conditions will affect everyone who will someday need their services. The public needs to know if the nurses are outside the hospital, there is something wrong inside. This is a movement happening all over the country and people should start paying attention. There is a package of bills in the Michigan legislature that will insure staffing ratios are the law. These bills eliminate mandatory overtime. These bills would make the hospitals accountable to publish their staffing ratios. The American Hospital Association and the American Nurses Association (ANA) oppose these bills. (Yes, ANA opposes it and lobbies firmly against it) What can we do? A lot.

Our legislators think we don't care because they aren't hearing from us. A wise intern at the legislature gave some sage advice. He said it is the interns who go through the mail, email, tweets, etc. If there are only one (1) or two (2) random communications about safe staffing, it probably will never see the representative's desk. This means those who are opposing it are the only voice your representatives are hearing. People are taking to the streets and we are going to have to tell the elected officials about the dangers facing patients who may be victims of unsafe staffing.

Have a twitter storm with your friends. Target your representatives. Demand they take notice of this. Don't tweet? Write the letters, send emails. You have a story that only you can tell. What happened when you again worked short? What danger was that for your patients? How did you feel when the shift was done? Are you contemplating joining the legions of nurses who are leaving the profession? In Michigan tell them to support the Michigan Safe Patient Care Act. HB 4629-4631 and SB 2392. For your National reps it is HR 2392 - Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patients.

Another very effective way to impact your representatives is to make an appointment to visit them. You all have some stories that will open their eyes to what is going on. Go eyeball to eyeball with them and tell them how unsafe it is to work mandated overtime and to take care of too many patients. They will not know unless nurses tell them.

We can no longer just wait for someone to do this for us. If you have any questions about how to do this please call **Julie Murray** at 517-887-8844 or email at [jmurray@local459.org](mailto:jmurray@local459.org)

## OPEIU Award to Local 459 Member

CMHA-CEI employee **Christina Johnson** was awarded a OPEIU Howard Coughlin scholarship in the amount of \$6,500. She has worked as a Community Support Technician with adults with intellectual disabilities for approximately eight (8) years. **Johnson** is just starting in the social work program at Spring Arbor University. She is working towards earning a Bachelor's degree within the next two years and her dream to become a case manager.



Christina Johnson and Local 459 Chief Steward Naudia Fisher

# Executive Board Action

The Local 459 Executive Board is made up of members elected by the membership. The Board meets at least monthly. It is at these meetings that many of the decisions regarding Local 459 members are presented, discussed, and decided.

Executive Board decisions made during the period of May to July 2018 of possible interest to the membership are outlined below. Decisions which have been discussed elsewhere in this newsletter are not included.

## ARBITRATIONS

Arbitration is the final step in the grievance process. The vast majority of grievances are settled prior to reaching arbitration. Both the Union and management present their case before a neutral arbitrator who makes a binding decision based on the merits of the case. Arbitration is an expensive and time consuming procedure. Local 459 has limited funds and cannot afford to arbitrate every grievance. Therefore, all unresolved grievances are presented to the Executive Board for review.

During this period three (3) unresolved grievances were taken before the Executive Board for review. The board voted that all three be taken to arbitration. One was from the MGL Technical unit regarding perfect attendance bonus; one was for a termination at Touchpoint Macomb and the final one was for termination at MGL POST.

## OTHER BUSINESS

The Executive Board appointed Stewards and Alternates at American Red Cross – Collections and CEI CMH –Large where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position. They also approved appointment of Chief Stewards for CEI CMH Residential Unit – **India Hudson**, American Red Cross Collections – **Kelly Brust**, American Red Cross LCD – **Cindy Dine**,

and Touchpoint Moross – **LaTanya Rodgers**.

The Executive Board approved the appointment of **Courtney Arganello** as LAFCU Member-at-large after the resignation of **Pam Hegmon**.

The Executive Board approved an agreement with ROCU, the union which represents Local 459 staff.

The Executive Board entered into an agreement with American Income Life to offer members an additional \$2000 Accidental Death and Disability insurance at no cost to the members.

Finally, the Board approved a good and welfare donation to the family of deceased member **Becky Koutz**.

## APPEAL PROCESS

The Local 459 Constitution allows the membership to modify or overturn any action of the Executive Board but any such decision must be done at a membership meeting in which a quorum is present and which is held or properly requested within one (1) calendar month of the Executive Board action.

A special membership meeting may be called upon a request submitted to the President by not less than three percent (3%) of the members in good standing. Currently, there are 2,786 members so a petition would require approximately eighty-four (84) signatures. Petitions are available from the Local 459 office.

For reviewing a decision to arbitrate or not to arbitrate a grievance, a special meeting may also be called by three quarters of the members in the bargaining unit in which the grievance arose. For some bargaining units this is less than three percent (3%) of all Local 459 members in good standing.

The regular meetings of the Executive Board are held the second Tuesday of each month. Draft minutes of the meeting are available no later than two (2) weeks following the meeting.

Please see the Constitution for specific details. Copies of the Constitution are available from the Local 459 office and on the Local 459 website.

## QUESTIONS?

If there are any questions or concerns about these decisions, please feel free to contact President **Sharon Taylor** by phone at (517) 887-8844 (Greater Lansing area) or (800)-833-1103 (outside Greater Lansing) or by email at [staylor@local459.org](mailto:staylor@local459.org).

## Holiday Baskets

Local 459 is accepting names of members who may be in need of extra support around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Names of Union members in need must be submitted by a steward on a Recommendation for Holiday Basket form. The forms will be sent to stewards and are available from the Local 459 office. Names will be accepted for Thanksgiving baskets October 22nd through November 16th; and through December 14th for Christmas.

Members are also encouraged to donate non-perishable food items to the basket program. Donations can be dropped off at the Local 459 office or we can arrange for a pick up.



Contact Ronda Ackerson at (517) 887-8844 or [rackerson@local459.org](mailto:rackerson@local459.org) for more information about the program.

# Bargaining Unit Spotlight

## CEI-CMHA Large Unit

Local 459 represents a bargaining unit at Community Mental Health Agency of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties (CEI-CMHA) of approximately six hundred (600) employees who are members of various professions. This bargaining unit is referred to as the "Large Unit". This bargaining unit was originally organized by the AFSCME unit in the 1970's. Later the employees decided to leave AFSCME and formed their own independent Union they called CMHEU. In 1981 after the residential employees at CEI-CMHA had unionized with OPEIU, the independent Union merged into Local 459 where they remain to this day. Since there were then two (2) bargaining units at CEI-CMHA, this one became known as the Large Unit.

The name Large Unit does not convey the many different classifications and skills of the Local 459 members. It is impossible to adequately cover all that these members do, however, this list will provide insight to some of the unit's classifications and duties.

The Large Unit has numerous professional employees. These employees have completed specific degree programs and maintained licensure in the areas of social work, psychology, counseling, dietetics, occupation therapy, and many other degrees related to the helping profession.

- **Client Services Specialists:** Provides case management to consumers, facilitates group work, and links consumers to community resources.
- **Developmental Disabilities Specialists and Clinicians:** Assesses and monitors consumers, creates treatment plans, coordinates housing related matters, and refers/links consumers to community resources.
- **Mental Health Therapists:** This classification varies by each department and unit, but these members conduct therapy, develop treatment plans, provide case management, and coordinates services within outside agencies.
- **Occupational Therapists:** Evaluates, treats, and develops programs for consumers with developmental disabilities in the area of neuromuscular.
- **Psychologists:** Completes therapy, recommends referrals, diagnosis consumer, and completes behavioral treatment plans.
- **Recovery Specialists:** Functions as liaison and consultant for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorder, provides input and monitors consumer treatment plans.
- **Registered Dietitians:** Develops treatment plans for consumers with specific dietary needs and works with families and group homes to maintain sanitation and cleanliness of consumer homes.
- **Vocational Counselors:** Assists consumers with developmental disabilities in searching for, obtaining, and maintaining employment.
- **Community Support Technicians:** Assists consumers in accessing their desired community activities, facilitates activity groups, and provides personal care.
- **Family Support Workers:** Works with children at risk of out of home placement by mentoring, providing transportation and supervision, and serving as a liaison for children and their families.
- **Mental Health Workers:** Assists in implementing and monitoring of consumer treatment plans, coordinates consumer activities, serves as a liaison between consumer and case manager/therapist.
- **Peer Support Specialists:** Previous consumers of service that works with current consumers to motivate, assist in developing and work towards completing treatment plan goals.
- **Reimbursement Clerks:** Coordinates and gathers consumer financial dates, assesses fees for service and monitors consumer accounts.
- **Secretaries:** Provides clerical support, schedules appointments, manages data, processes data, and assists in special projects.

The Large Unit also has highly skilled paraprofessional staff that provides direct support to CMH consumers and their families.

Over the years the Large Unit has grown to become one of Local 459's biggest bargaining units. Their employer is under constant threats of funding cuts and layoffs. The Large Unit membership has become an active and political group. They have a history of attending CMH Board and County Commissioner meetings to advocate for themselves and their consumers. When necessary they will rally at the Capitol, phone bank and do letter writing campaigns.

This large and diverse group is able to come together in solidarity. They are an important part of Local 459 and its history.

# Grievances Settled

*The members, stewards and staff of Local 459 settle many grievances each quarter. There is insufficient space to publish all of them. Grievances which are unique or affect a large number of members are more likely to be published. If you would like to publicize a grievance you have settled, contact your Service Representative.*



## MGL Technical PTO Increases Stopped

In March McLaren Greater Lansing Technical Certified Surgical Techs, **Christina Wilson** and **Kathy Foltz** were looking over their paychecks. They both noticed that they were still receiving the beginning Paid Time Off (PTO) accrual rate. Wilson and Foltz were hired in 2010, and should have an accrual rate that reflects more than five (5) years seniority.

They contacted Chief Steward, **Kerry Miller**. Upon further investigation, it was determined that there were thirteen (13) Technical Bargaining Unit members who had not received their proper PTO accrual rate increase since the expiration of the Technical contract in 2015.

Vice President of HR, **Amy Dorr**, agreed to make all thirteen (13) employees whole by reinstating their PTO banks with hours owed.

## MGL POST Didn't Give Shift

**Robin Mills** is a Patient Access employee at MGL. **Mills** signed up

on the volunteer list for extra open shifts in her department. **Mills** found out that the shift was given to a lower senior employee. **Mills** contacted Steward **Kendra Moore**. **Moore** contacted the supervisor **Colleen Taraskavage** and initiated the first step of the grievance process.

**Taraskavage** agreed and paid **Mills** as if she had worked the shift.

## MGL POST Took Shift Away

**Annie Vanness** is a Unit Assistant at MGL. **Vanness** was given a mandatory Low Census Day Off (laid off) for part of her shift. **Vanness** discovered that a per diem employee was allowed to work her full shift. **Vanness** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** and a grievance was filed.

**Davis-Thomas** referred the manager to Article 26 in the contract regarding Low Census Day Off and who should be mandated first. After the discussion the manager agreed and paid **Vanness** as if she had worked.

## MGL POST On-Call Not Used

The Sterile Processing Department (SPD) at MGL has an on-call policy. **Tina Gorden** an employee in SPD department on Penn Campus was on-call for the weekend. Their policy states that if Greenlawn campus needs equipment to be transported over, they are to contact the on-call employee. This did not happen and **Gorden** found out that a Greenlawn campus employee came over to Penn campus and retrieved some equipment that was needed.

**Gorden** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who initiated a grievance. The Human Resource

consultant denied the grievance. **Davis-Thomas** then proceeded to the next step of the grievance process. **Davis-Thomas** had a meeting with the Manager of the Human Resource department. The Manager agreed that the on-call policy of the department was violated and **Gorden** was paid on-call pay as if she had worked.

## MGL POST OT Not Offered

**Sunni Lira** is a scheduler in the MGL Patient Access Department at Penn Campus. According to our contract with MGL, extra hours must be offered to high senior employee if they not in overtime or if the low senior and high senior are both are in overtime. **Lira** found out that she was never given the opportunity to work some extra hours, instead they were offered to a lower senior employee in the department.

**Lira** a steward for the Union initiated the first step grievance with the manager. The supervisor investigated and agreed that **Lira** should have been offered the overtime. They agreed to pay her nine (9) hours as if she worked.

## MGL POST Contract Requires Notice Before Firing

MGL has a no-fault attendance system. You lose points every time you call in sick. Get to zero points and you can be fired. Our contract requires MGL to give employees notices about attendance points. The employer must notify the employee when they have reached seven (7) points and again at three (3) points (or less). The notice shall be in writing, indicating the point level and

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they must give a copy to Local 459. An employee will not be subject to termination if the employee has not been given this notice.

An environmental services employee at MGL was terminated because she was out of points. She was given a seven (7) point notice, but was never given her three (3) point notice. The employee contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** whom initiated the first step grievance with the EVS manager. It was denied.

**Davis-Thomas** proceeded to the next step of the grievance process and it was denied again. The employee went before the Local 459 Executive Board and they agreed to arbitrate the grievance. Before arbitration the Manager of Human Resource department agreed that she was not given her proper notice and she was reinstated to her position at MGL.

### MGL RN Pay for Training at Home

MGL used to have an education department that taught the mandatory PALS training for those units that take care of pediatric patients. This training typically takes eight hours with part of it done on line and the rest in the classroom. Recently they changed to sending people to MSU for the training and expecting them to complete the online portion while punched in at the hospital. Several people were not aware of having to be punched in and completed the four hour online portion at home.

When **Jamie Burgess** asked to be compensated for this online portion, her manager refused and told her it must be completed at a hospital computer while punched in. She questioned this and asked

RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** to step in. When **Murray** investigated this, she found there was nothing written in the directions during sign up for the class, and when she questioned management she was told employees were given verbal instruction on their units regarding this during the 'Huddle". **Murray** went to the communication book in the department **Burgess** works, which would normally contain Huddle information, only to find it completely blank. She then looked at the minutes from staff meetings and found the last entry was from 2015. Once she was able to prove that not everyone was told this, she was able to get compensation for **Burgess**, along with **Kristin Silvers**, **Abby Bhatt** and **Sandra Arnett**. It was agreed that moving forward the directions would be clearly stated during the sign up period, that the expectation would be the on line portion would be completed on a hospital computer while punched in.

### MGL RN Forgot to Cancel Mandation

In February **Jennifer Walker**, a nurse in the Labor and Delivery department at MGL, was supposed to come in for a mandated shift and receive the double time premium. Unbeknownst to her, the contact nurse had found someone else to work that shift and did not let **Walker** know she did not have to come in. When she showed up to work, they told her she could stay but not get the mandation pay of double time. **Walker** went home and let her steward **Theresa Wing** and Chief Steward **Murray** know what happened. A grievance was filed.

The manager agreed that a mistake had been made but would only settle for paying her two (2) hours the manager felt the contract required. **Murray** pointed out that language

applies when someone is sent home because of a low census and does not apply in this case. The grievance was taken to Human Resources and they agreed to pay **Walker** the hours she would have worked for that shift at the rate of two (2) times her hourly pay.

### MGL RN Check Web Scheduler

**Jane Montague** is a nurse in the PACU department at MGL Greenlawn. The RN contract allows a regular budgeted employee to indicate when they would like to pick up extra shifts in web scheduler, MGL's on-line system. Several months in advance **Montague** put in to work a couple extra shifts and the manager scheduled a per diem instead. Regular employees get first choice over a per diem and they also can bump a per diem with at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice. The manager took no notice of **Montague's** web scheduler indications that she wanted to work those shifts so **Montague** asked **Julie Murray** to file a grievance on her behalf. HR agreed that Jane should have been allowed to work those shifts and was paid for more than sixteen (16) hours at the call pay rate of time and one half.

### MGL RN Pulled to Work but Not Given Mandation Pay

During MGL's transition to a new medical records system, Cerner, there were several employees that took training to become "Cerner Experts". They were assigned to work with staff who had questions about the new records system. On a few occasions in the OB department the Cerner experts were pulled off that assignment and put back on the floor to do patient care. They

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expected double time for being mandated. The manager felt this was just an assignment change and did not fulfill the requirements for being mandated in for a shift. On the days in question several other staff were mandated in from home. Also there has been occasions that a nurse has been at the hospital for a meeting and gotten pulled to their department for a shift and given mandation pay.

These nurses felt their situation was similar to being pulled from a meeting and mandated to their department. All were on extra shifts and were not regularly scheduled to work those days. After much discussion in Human Resources, the grievants agreed, in a non-precedent setting basis, to get paid for half of the hours as mandation. Chief Steward **Julie Murray** assisted them and agreed, along with the grievants, to settle.

### MGL RN Sent Home in Error

The RN contract at MGL say that when someone has to go home when census drops it is the low seniority person. Some units vote to use an alternate method. On the OB unit they use a rotation method instead of always sending the lowest senior person home. It was a nurse's regular day to work when census went down and the manager determined someone had to go home. This was during the time of the Transition to the new Cerner electronic records system and there was someone there scheduled extra to be the Cerner expert. The nurse they determined had to go home was also a Cerner expert but they sent her home before the nurse scheduled extra. She called Chief Steward **Julie Murray** for assistance.

The contract says someone working extra goes home first. HR agreed that she should not have been sent home and agreed to pay her for the

twelve hours she missed out on and put the PTO time she used back in her bank.

### MGL RN Clearly Mandation Pay

The RN contract at MGL calls for a nurse to be paid double time if they are required to stay after the end of their shift because management did not replace someone who called in or was on leave. **Megan Cook** works in the PACU department at the Greenlawn campus and during her orientation had to stay past the end of her shift. It was a busy day and the contact nurse tried to get the manager to approve this mandation pay for **Cook** before she left for the day. The manager told her she would get the approval the next day but it did not happen.

They contacted their Chief Steward **Julie Murray** who filed a grievance. HR argued this was incidental overtime but eventually agreed to pay the hour she stayed over at the mandation rate. It was agreed that moving forward, requests for mandation would be approved more clearly by the manager.

### MGL RN Sent Home Out of Order

When the patient census drops at MGL, management is allowed to reduce the number of staff but is required to follow a specific order. People working extra go home before someone who is working a regularly scheduled shift. In May **Tonya Thelen** was working her regular shift and the census dropped on her unit. On that day another nurse was working extra and allowed to stay.

**Thelen** consulted with her Chief Steward **Julie Murray** who agreed she should have been able to work her shift. Once this was pointed out to the manager, she

agreed and **Thelen** was paid the hours she would have worked.

### MGL RN Banking System Changed

When a fulltime MGL RN is not working a holiday, the contract allows them the option to be paid for the day or to bank the hours. In the Emergency Department they have a payroll exception book where they have always been allowed to indicate their preference for holiday compensation. After working a holiday **Chris Kennedy** chose to bank the hours and followed the long standing procedure of putting his request in this payroll exception book. When he realized this holiday was not banked, he called payroll to find out why. **Kennedy** was told payroll no longer recognizes the use of this book and he should have submitted this request himself to payroll. No one was ever notified of a change and if notified, Local 459 would have requested to bargain over this change.

HR agreed to intervene and allowed **Kennedy** to bank his holiday hours in his PTO bank.



### Touchpoint at Moross System Error

**Felecia King** and **Kevinetta Jackson** both work as cooks for Touchpoint food service department at Moross hospital. One day both cooks were working on the line, **King** was preparing omelets and **Jackson** was taking the omelets from **King** and adding other food items to the plate. Somehow an omelet with

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mushrooms was made that ended up getting to a patient that was allergic to mushroom. Both **Jackson** and **King** received disciplines for the mix up.

**King and Jackson** both contacted Chief Steward **Latonya Rodgers** to file grievances. During the grievance meeting it was argued that the process was flawed since the omelet had to go through four people before it reached the patient including a supervisor and that communication needed to be clarified between all involved. The grievance was settled with both **King** and **Jackson** discipline being removed and replaced with a non-disciplinary verbal warning.

### Touchpoint at Moross Overreactions?

**Edward Brown** is a Touchpoint environmental service attendant at Moross hospital. One day **Brown** was working on the Behavior Unit (where patients are cared for that have mental health problems). A female patient came out of her room near **Brown** and started removing her clothes, **Brown** called out for nursing which drew the attention of others patient who came out of their rooms. An allegation was made by the patient that **Brown** photographed her.

After the film footage was reviewed, **Brown** was cleared of that allegation, however he did get a severe discipline for not reporting the incident and having a reaction that led to other patients coming out of their rooms.

**Brown** contacted **Steward Darlene Curry** who filed a grievance on his behalf. The grievance was settled with the discipline being reduced to a first progressive counseling limited to six (6) months

### Touchpoint at Moross More Body Fluids than Normal

**Brenda Henley** is a Touchpoint EVS service attendant at the Moross Hospital. One day, she was instructed to clean a public bathroom. **Henley** declined because it was a large mess and she believed that she was not equipped to clean bodily fluids (vomit) of this amount. **Henley** received a discipline for refusing to do work.

**Henley** contacted her Steward **Darlene Curry**, who file a grievance on **Henley's** behalf. The grievance was settled after it was agreed that the clean-up required more than just normal attention

### Touchpoint at Oakland Seniority Allows Bump

**Tiffaney Ivey** is a Touchpoint environmental service attendant at the Oakland Macomb Hospital. Management made the decision to restructure the work force by eliminating two (2) shifts from the day shift and adding them to the afternoon shift.

**Ivey** was the least senior and her day shift position was eliminated. Management had planned on assigning **Ivey** to the afternoon shift. **Ivey** did not want to leave the day shift, but she did not want to go to afternoons and a midnight shift would have been preferable for her and her family situation. **Ivey's** seniority allowed her to bump the least senior on the midnight shift, but management was insisting that she go to the afternoon shift.

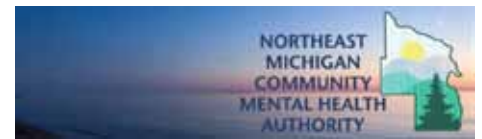
**Ivey** contacted **Chief Steward Louversa Fair** who filed a grievance on her behalf. It was argued that seniority should prevail and that the contract language supports **Ivey's** bumping the least senior. The grievance was granted, and **Ivey** was awarded the midnight position.

### Touchpoint at Macomb Catering Position

A class action grievance was filed by Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** for the Touchpoint associates in the food and nutrition department at Macomb hospital for not follow seniority for filling open positions.

There was an open position in the catering department, **Barry Hughes** applied for the position and met all requirement and was the highest senior associate that applied, however **Hughes** was not awarded the position.

The grievance was granted at the third (3rd) step when Local 459 was able to successfully argue that **Hughes** did apply and was the highest equally qualified applicant. **Hughes** was given the position.



### NEM CMH Sorry for Your Loss

**Elizabeth Cook** is a Residential Worker at Northeast Michigan Community Health (NEM-CMH) at the Pine Park Home. **Cook** unfortunately had to use bereavement leave. When she got her check, she discovered the bereavement hours was shorted one-half an hour (1/2). What she was told was that because she stayed late on one of her shifts (30 minutes) in that same pay period and there was to be no overtime, that why it they took thirty (30) minutes from her bereavement hours.

**Cook** filed a grievance, the grievance was granted, and **Cook** was paid on the next pay period.

## Steward Spotlight

### Julie Murray – RN Chief Steward for McLaren Greater Lansing

The contract between McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) and the Local 459 Registered Nurses allows for a full-time Chief Steward on leave. This Chief Steward works full-time at Local 459, representing the nearly 500 MGL Nurses.

The current Chief Steward is RN **Julie Murray. Murray** has been at MGL since 1979. She started as a Surgical Technologist at what was then Ingham Regional Medical Center (IRMC). Later, she became a Registered Nurse, but always stayed in the Surgery Department.

“Being a Nurse is a very rewarding profession. It was a lifelong desire of mine to become an RN”, said **Murray**.

“I like my McLaren co-workers a lot! The friendships I have made feel more like family.” **Murray** said.

**Murray** became a Steward in 2011 and says she quickly realized that the Union gives us a greater voice in the workplace. She became Chief Steward in 2012. In that same year, OPEIU also started the International Nurses Council (ONC). **Murray** is the Vice Chair of the Council. She is always willing to take on leadership roles when she sees a need. “We address professional concerns of Nurses such as safe staffing. The ONC has been very active in supporting legislation on both the local and national level. She was asked to be a speaker at the Nurses Take DC rally the last three years. The ONC hosted nurse’s education so they could meet with their congress people about issues important to patient safety. “We are trying to get a safe staffing law passed nationally and at the State level”, **Murray** said. “Local 459 is a very strong Union, and we have fought and won to have staffing ratios in our contract, but that’s not always the case for other nurses. Most people don’t realize that there is no law limiting how many patient’s management can assign to a single nurse. It’s not always safe.”



**Murray** also is a member of the McLaren Nurses Honor Guard. The Nurses perform a ceremony at funerals or memorial services of nurses that have passed on. The Honor Guard dresses in the traditional white uniform with cap and cape (as **Murray** is pictured here) and they officially release them of their nursing duties. “After speaking at the rally in DC, I was able to help start other Honor Guards all over the U.S., from Florida to Arizona and as far away as Alaska. I’m very proud of that”, **Murray** said.

**Murray** spends most of her time working, and with nurses related activities. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with family and friends. She has two (2) sons, Dan and T.J. Dan is a Medical Supply Representative and **T.J.** is a police officer with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. She is very proud of both of them. Oh, and she likes hanging out with her Boston Terrier and best friend Fisher, who is also a regular at Local 459 and spoiled by all of the staff here.

Local 459 President **Sharon Taylor** sums up Murry this way. “**Julie** is one of those people that we can always count on. She knows the MGL RN contract inside and out and is always available to the MGL nurses. She strives constantly to give great service and to show members the true meaning of solidarity. Her integrity and sense of duty are qualities that I truly admire. Local 459 is very lucky to have her.” We all agree! And no Julie, you can’t retire yet!

# American Red Cross Assault on Michigan



The National Red Cross has begun an aggressive assault against the Local 459 members at the Red Cross. The Local 459 members in the Michigan Red Cross have better wages and benefits than almost all other Red Cross employees in the United States (see Jan – March 2018 459 Update). The American Red Cross has been in negotiations with its other Unions and under pressure from them to equalize benefits.

Instead of raising the other Unions up to the Local 459 level, the Red Cross gave notice that it was all but ceasing blood operations in Michigan effective November 1st. They plan to stop collecting blood in Michigan expect for a few small fixed sites. This will mean the layoff of almost all its Michigan employees; Local 459 members, non-Union employees and members of other Unions.

If this is implemented, the Red Cross will still supply blood to Michigan hospitals but it will come from donors in lower wage states. There were no plans announced as to how the Red Cross would collect the missing blood in the event of a national emergency a natural disaster in those other states.

The National Red Cross then stated that some of the layoffs could be avoided if Local 459 members agreed to pay and benefit cuts. The Red Cross said that it would only layoff thirty five percent (35%) of the workers if the remaining workers would take cuts in wages and benefits. The cuts included:

- Health care premium co-pays up to \$778 a pay period for full time employees
- Employees could be required to drive up to 90 miles to staff a blood drive and would not be paid for travel time
- A cut in pay of \$1.37 per hour for almost all employees
- Guaranteed hours cut from 40 to 35
- Elimination of Monday – Friday schedules, all employees move to seven (7) day schedules regardless of seniority
- 54 people laid off
- No guarantee of future job security

The National Red Cross labeled this their “final offer” to prevent all but ceasing blood operations in Michigan. They rejected all of the alternative packages suggested by Local 459. While finding the cuts unfair and unjustified, Local 459 President Sharon Taylor decided that since additional layoffs were at stake it had to be presented to the membership for a vote. Red Cross members voted to reject it. The vote was:

49 Yes (40%)  
72 No (60%)

As this newsletter goes to press, Local 459 has offered to resume bargaining and the clock is ticking on the Red Cross ceasing operations in most of Michigan. The National Red Cross has always been hostile to Unions but its latest actions showed a new level of callousness.

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## Vote Yes on Proposal 2

Politicians draw voting maps that directly benefit themselves, instead of putting the interests of voters or communities of Michigan first.

It's called gerrymandering and it's a real problem in Michigan:

Voters Not Politicians is a nonpartisan, grassroots group working to pass Proposal 2 that will fix Michigan's broken redistricting process.

Allowing politicians to draw their own districts is a conflict of interest. When politicians have the power to draw voting maps, they have the power to hand-pick their voters.

Gerrymandering benefits politicians and it hurts the rest of us, regardless of our political preference. When politicians choose their voters, our votes don't matter and our voices aren't heard.

