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From the
President's Desk

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Contracts Settled

Centra Wellness gets 1 Year Contract

Centra Wellness (formerly Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health) just agreed to a one (1) year contract with Local 459 and its ten (10) members.

The contract includes a fifty-cent (\$0.50) per hour wage increase along with a two and one half percent (2½%) raise. It also includes an agreement to lower health care co-premiums from fifteen percent (15%) to ten percent (10%).

The agreement was made with management in record time, one conference call. Local 459 appreciates Centra Wellness management working with us to give employees a fair deal.

The contract was unanimously ratified by the Local 459 membership. The bargaining team members were **Denise Holmquist** and **Thomas Zatarga**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.



Jalyn Morgan voting at Centra Wellness

McLaren Greater Lansing Paraprofessionals unanimously approve 4 Year Contract

The nineteen (19) paraprofessionals at doctor's offices owned by McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) recently unanimously approved a four (4) year contract. The group was looking for fair raises and no concessions. That's what they got.

The agreement gives employees raises of four percent (4%) in the first year and three-percent (3%) in each of the following three (3) years, for a total of thirteen-percent (13%) over the life of the contract.

They also have "me too" language that allows for recruitment and retention pay adjustments if non-union staff receive them. In past years, this has equaled between two percent (2%) and three percent (3%) annually. Members also received a five-hundred dollar (\$500) signing bonus.

The bargaining team was **Kristeen Glandon** and **Angela Lucas**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.

Each year Local 459 hires Certified Public Accountants to review our books. The review for 2017 was recently completed and submitted to the Local 459 Executive Board. Below are excerpts from the review.

SUPPORT AND REVENUES	
Dues and initiations	\$ 1,037,343
Interest income	1,478
Other	<u>39,081</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	1,077,902
EXPENSES	
Salaries and wages	367,007
Payroll taxes and other fringe benefits	<u>124,473</u>
Total salaries and related expenses	491,480
Per capita	421,119
Members services	33,190
Contractual services	66,157
Automobile expenses	5,177
Insurance	5,323
Office expenses	19,390
Rent	24,623
Refunds and reimbursements	8,091
Conferences and training	5,000
Travel	16,148
Communication	7,026
Postage	11,517
Printing	10,939
Miscellaneous	<u>9,174</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>1,134,354</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(56,452)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>428,996</u>
Net assets, end of year	\$ 372,544

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the assets, liabilities, and net assets - cash basis of the OPEIU, Local #459 as of December 31, 2017, and its support, revenue, and expenses - cash basis for the year then ended in accordance with the cash basis of accounting as described in Note B.

Local 459 • On the Web: www.local459.org



459 Update

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Training

Local 459 Members Attend All Regions Educational Conference And Day of Remembrance

Five (5) Local 459 members attended the first OPEIU All Regions Educational Conference held in Memphis,

Tennessee from April 2nd through April 4th. The conference was held in conjunction with the AFL-CIO remembrance of the “I am a Man” march and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.



Members **Lois Davis-Thomas**, **Kerry Miller** and **Julie Murray** of MGL and **Naudia Fisher** from CEI CMH along with President **Sharon Taylor** attended workshops on Building Local Union power to meet the coming challenges including best practices for conducting internal organizing, recommitting members for the long-haul, member to member conversations, using social media, mobilizing members to fight off attacks, local union collaboration and much more.

Local 459 joined OPEIU members from around the country for the “I Am 2018” March in Memphis

Members Attend AFL-CIO Organizing Institute

Some dedicated Local 459 members recently attended a three (3) day training on Internal Organizing put on by the AFL-CIO in Detroit April 6th-8th.

During this training participants learned about the principles of union organizing; what happens in an organizing campaign, how to meet one-on-one with members and answer questions. They learned how to build leadership in the workplace and start committees to inoculate workers against management anti-union campaigns. They also learned about how to bring workers issues to light and build solidarity around those issues to help workers solve problems in the workplace.

In the current anti-worker climate these are important skills for all union leaders to have so that we can help members get their needs met.



Charles Terry Local 459, Kyra Keusch MGL RN, Tristian Clark Touchpoint Moross and India Hudson CEI CMH at the Organizing Institute held in Detroit

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 February 2018 to April 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 there were no unresolved grievances taken before the Executive Board for review.

BUSINESS

The Executive Board appointed Stewards and Alternates at American Red Cross – Collections and LCD, CEI CMH – Residential and Large units, LAFCU, Child and Family Charities, MCTVS, MMG, TIC, Michigan Association of United Ways, Rivertown Federal Credit Union and Hospice where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position.

The Executive Board approved a budget for 2018, along with the 2017 Audit Report, 2017 LM2 Report to the Department of Labor and 2017 990 tax return.

The Executive Board agreed to enter

into merger discussions with other Michigan Locals.

The Executive Board also approved sending members to the OPEIU National Educational Conference in Memphis, Tennessee and to AFL-CIO Organizing Institute in Detroit, Michigan. Both in April. Finally, the Board accepted the Good and Welfare report for 2017.

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 887-8844 (Greater Lansing area) or (800)-833-1103 (outside Greater Lansing) or by email at staylor@local459.org.

Free College Fall Deadlines are Approaching

The deadlines to register for fall semester I classes through the OPEIU Free College Benefit is August 17th. Don't miss out! Apply today at FreeCollege.opeiu.org.

Through the OPEIU Free College benefit, OPEIU members in good standing and their families can earn an associate degree completely free of charge. Every member or retired member, as well as spouses, children, grandchildren and dependents of OPEIU members, can earn a two-year online degree and certificates with absolutely no out-of-pocket costs for tuition, fees or e-books. Associate degree programs are available in general studies, health care, business management, criminal justice, paralegal and early childhood education.

Here are upcoming registration deadlines

Fall I 2018 semester: Aug. 17, 2018

Fall II 2018 semester: Oct. 12, 2018

Visit FreeCollege.opeiu.org, or call 888-590-9009 for more information. Take advantage of this valuable benefit available to OPEIU members and their families.

To date, 524 students have received \$960,550 in scholarships through the OPEIU Free College program.

Steward Spotlight

Steward Spotlight Yshanti Jackson Hope Network Behavioral Service (HNBHS)



Yshanti Jackson is a long-term employee for Hope Network Behavioral Service (HNBHS). She has worked there for eighteen (18) years. Back when **Jackson** first started she worked for Hope one (1) year and left. She then went to work for another agency ironically, when she worked for the agency they sent her to work at Hope. **Jackson** returned to Hope after a year, and **Jackson** has been there ever since.

Jackson works at the Ridge program. The Ridge program is one (1) of four (4) program on the Grandview campus that is a community/home setting for consumers with mental impairments.

When **Jackson** first started HNBHS was not unionized. **Jackson's** family originally were from Indiana, **Jackson** comes from a long line of union family members including her grandfather, father and mother to name a few. When **Jackson** was asked to step up to fill in a vacant steward position she gladly accepted. **Jackson** has been a steward for two (2) years has helped with grievances and Joint Labor Management Conferences (JLMC). When asked what the union in the workplace means to you **Jackson**

simply stated "It help keeps thing fair...and it requires HNBHS to follow a line and not cross the line." **Jackson** recounts a time when HNBHS blatantly violated the contract and changed the healthcare and HNBHS was successfully sued by the union and each employee received cash settlements twice during two separate negotiations!

Jackson has three (3) children **Quavon** 23, **Tashirell** 19, and **Mario** 6. **Jackson** also has two (2) grandchildren **Zaliyaha** 2, and **Zahahara** 8 months.

Some of **Jackson's** hobbies are doing DIY projects, playing computer games and she love planning and decorating theme parties. We are so glad to have her on our team at Local 459!

Whitney Benko – McLaren Greater Lansing POST Unit



Whitney Benko is a Radiology Assistant at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) and has been employed there for fifteen (15) years. He started off in the Shipping / Receiving Department but only did that for about six (6) months before applying for his current position. **Benko** transports employees so he gets around the hospital and

knows just about everybody. **Benko's** co-workers really enjoy working with him, and have nothing but good things to say.

Benko enjoys helping patients. He is very personable and interacts well with them. It's always tough to be in the hospital, but when you have qualified, friendly staff to help you, it makes it much easier.

Benko has been a Steward for two (2) years. He has a tough job as Steward because he represents the Emergency Department, Patient Access, Lab, Heart Station, Radiology and Special Studies departments. He was also an alternate on the most recent bargaining team. He plans on running for the next bargaining team. When asked what he likes about being a Steward, **Benko** says that he wants all his co-workers to be treated fairly and equally. He also works hard to keep management in check by making sure they live up to the agreement. "If you give management an inch, they will take a mile. I've learned that the hard way. We both sign the contract", **Benko** says. "We both need to follow it"

Benko has been married for six (6) years to wife **Michelle**. She is a store manager at Walgreens. He has a fourteen (14) year old son that is a freshman at Holt High School. He also has a high energy three (3) year old Wheaton Terrier named **Cash** who keeps him busy.

When not working or representing Local 459 members, **Benko** enjoys golfing and is on a Cornhole League where he has been a three (3) time champion. He also has season tickets to the Detroit Lions where he just recently moved up to the 7th row.

Local 459 appreciates all the hard work done on behalf of the MGL POST membership by **Benko**.

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 RN 7 Gets Seniority

The RN contract at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) allows a person who was previously in the Technical or POST bargaining unit to get all of that seniority back after seven (7) years in the RN bargaining unit.

Ashley Reader had previously been in the POST unit and contacted her Chief Steward **Julie Murray** when she realized her seven (7) years were up and she did not have her seniority restored. **Murray** was easily able to help her by notifying HR that she was now eligible and they changed her seniority dated back to when she was hired into the POST unit.

MGL RN PALS Pay

There are certain certifications that are required for MGL RNs to work in specialty units. The Pediatric nurses are required to have Pediatric Advanced Life Support or PALS to improve the quality of care provided to seriously ill or injured children. The MGL RN contract requires payment

while taking these classes and MGL offers them three (3) times a year at the hospital.

Deb Ellsworth was not able to attend the class closest to her due date because of a previously scheduled vacation. She was taken off the schedule until completion of the course work and was not paid to take the class at another hospital. Chief Steward **Murray** argued that there is limited availability to take the classes at MGL and that **Ellsworth** should be paid to take the class and also cover the cost of taking the class. **Murray** was able to negotiate a settlement to get **Ellsworth's** hours that she spent taking the class paid as she would have been paid to take the class at MGL.

MGL RN Double Timed

When staffing is at a crisis level at MGL they often offer to pay RNs double time if someone will pick up a shift. **Sheilyn Hall** got a text message offering double time if she would pick up a shift on Christmas Eve in the ER. She agreed to take it but then instead a per diem was put on call and called in.

Chief Steward **Julie Murray** argued that **Hall** should have been given the shift at the agreed upon double time and the per diem should never have been put on call. HR and the manager said **Hall** should have said she wanted to bump the per diem and taken the call shift. A settlement was reached that she would be paid for the three (3) hours the per diem worked but at the time and one half paid for being on call.

MGL RN Surgery not FML

The Family Medical Leave Act protects an employee's position while they are off for a serious

medical condition. An RN in the MGL bargaining unit had surgery but used her own PTO to cover her while she was off. During that time she had another injury that prevented her from returning to work and for which she filed for FMLA. For some reason, HR counted her time off for her surgery as FMLA even though she never applied for it. MGL posted and filled her position before it was time for her to return to work.

She contacted her Chief Steward **Julie Murray** who was able to get them to realize a mistake had been made. They reinstated her position and she was able to return to work.

MGL RN Rotate

The MGL RN contract has specific language about who is sent home if there is not enough patients. Usually it is the low senior. The contract allows some departments to use an alternate method. This has to be voted on by Local 459 members on that unit. On 2 East at the Penn Campus they use a rotation method when census drops and a nurse has to be sent home.

Kim McDonald was sent home out of the rotation because the contact nurse thought she should be sent home because she was in overtime. But being in overtime does not override the rotation method. **McDonald** had picked up an extra shift earlier in the pay period to help out. If she had been sent home it would have reduced her total hours and she would not have received that overtime. She contacted **Julie Murray**, her Chief Steward. **Murray** was able to show the manager that the rotation should have been upheld. Fortunately, the manager agreed

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and **McDonald** was paid for the time she was sent home.

MGL Technical Must Document & Can't Mandate

Brittany Seiler is a Surgical Tech on days in the MGL Greenlawn Campus Operating Room. In February she was given a written warning for misconduct and was ordered to complete two (2) "Counseling Sessions" within two (2) weeks. Her supervisor stated that **Seiler** was given several "coaching and mentoring" notifications prior to this corrective action meeting.

Seiler was accompanied to the meeting by Chief Steward, **Kerry Miller**, who asked for documentation of the previous coaching and mentoring sessions. **Miller** also called into question the mandation of counseling session for employees. Upon further investigation, it was determined that there were no documented coaching and mentoring notifications in **Seiler's** file, and that counseling sessions can only be recommended by HR but not mandated. The step one written warning was withdrawn and replaced with a first-time coaching and mentoring notification. **Seiler** was reimbursed for her time spent attending the counseling sessions.

MGL POST Watch Your Insurance Bills

Kathy Jones is an EVS Tech I at MGL. **Jones** had a family member that was seen at the MGL Emergency room. When **Jones** received her bill it was for an outrageous amount. **Jones** contacted Steward **Brenda Densmore** asking her if we have to pay such a high co-pay being a MGL employee. **Densmore** contacted

the manager of Patient Access who told her that ER physician bill was separate from the facility deductible.

Densmore wasn't understanding the reason for the high bill, so she contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who followed-up with MGL Corporate billing office. They forwarded her to the Degara group which does the billing for the physicians at MGL. **Davis-Thomas** spoke to the Manager of the Degara Physicians group and explained the situation and asked why MGL employees are receiving such high bills. The Manager of the Degara group informed her that the bill was a mistake and **Jones** account would be receiving a credit. **Davis-Thomas** asked her to check other employee's bill that may have been affected also. There were more MGL employees bills found with errors and the manager stated those would be corrected also.

MGL POST Zippi Makes it Right

Kristina Hanson, an employee at MGL Patient Access department, signed up to work extra hours. Hanson contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** when she found out that the extra hours were given to a lower senior employee. **Davis-Thomas** contacted Manager **Mary Zippi** of Patient Access. **Zippi** agreed that **Hanson** should have been awarded the extra hours and agreed to pay **Hanson** as if she had worked.

MGL POST Must Use On-Call

The MGL POST Agreement states that management will not mandate an employee if they have a scheduled on call person. **Rebecca Witgen**, an ED Tech, was scheduled

on call for a shift and found out that a co-worker was mandated instead of calling **Witgen** in to work the shift. **Witgen** contacted **Lois Davis-Thomas** who contacted the ED manager and it was agreed that **Witgen** should have been called in. They agreed to pay **Witgen** as if she had worked the on-call shift.

MGL POST Per Diem Can't Work Regular

Recently a member had a concern about a per diem person having regular scheduled hours in the MGL Endoscopy department. The member contacted Steward **Brenda Densmore** who initiated a step one (1) class action conversation with the PACU manager informing her that a casual worker cannot be given a regular schedule. When HR authorizes hours to be added to existing hours, it means adding to existing Union hours. The manager agreed and she will be posting a forty (40) per pay shift.



Hope HR Makes it Right

Ruth Sprague is a Residential Instructor (RI) at the Alpine Grove program for Hope Network Behavioral Service (HNBHS) on the Grandview campus. **Sprague** followed the protocol for signing up for extra/overtime shifts but was not called to work an overtime shift.

Sprague was going to file a grievance, but Human Resource recognized that **Sprague** was overlooked and a lesser senior coworker worked the shift. **Sprague** was paid eight (8) hours at time and a half.

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Hope Non Union Worked

Mary Paxson is a cook at the Pivot program for Hope Network Behavioral Service (HNBHS). One day there was an open shift at Pivot. The shift was worked by non-union employee and **Paxson** was not given the opportunity to work the shift.

Paxson contacted Steward **Tammi Wright** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted at the first step and **Paxson** was paid eight (8) hours for the shift.



Touchpoint – Macomb Very Slow Resignation

Tywann Perry is a Food Service Worker for Touchpoint at the St Johns Macomb hospital. **Perry** was having a conversation with the Food and Nutrition Director. **Perry** became frustrated and said that he was going to resign. After **Perry** left for the day he calmed down and he wanted to retract his verbal resignation. The director refused to accept his retraction but he had **Perry** work another week to finish out the schedule.

Perry contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on his behalf. The grievance was denied at the first (1st) and second (2nd) step, however the grievance was successfully argued that a written resignation is required and that letting him work another week showed he had not really quit. The grievance was granted.

Touchpoint – Moross Worker Needs a Pill

Jeffery Jones is a third (3rd) shift Environmental Service Worker for

Touchpoint at the St Johns Moross hospital. One night **Jones** left his medication in his car and went out to his car to retrieve it. **Jones** was spotted by the oncoming manager and was given a corrective action.

Jones contacted Steward **Darlene Curry** who filed a grievance on his behalf. During the first step grievance meeting **Jones** agreed he should have notified the night supervisor first, and that he would next time but a corrective action was too harsh because he needed to get and take his medications.

The corrective action was removed and **Jones** was given a note to file instead.

Touchpoint – Macomb Director Needs a Chill Pill

Lawrence Smith and **Demetrius Gill** are both Environmental Service Workers for Touchpoint at the St John Macomb hospital. The contract for Touchpoint got settled in December but Touchpoint did not implement the raises when they were supposed to. One day Chief Steward **Blenda Steward** was walking by and **Smith** and **Gill** stopped her to ask for an update when they might be receiving their raise and bonus. The Assistant Director saw them and wrote them both up.

Chief steward **Blenda Coward** filed a grievance for both **Smith** and **Gill**. Both grievance were denied at the first (1st) and second (2nd) steps. Both were granted at step three (3). The disciplines were removed.

Touchpoint – Macomb Leak Creates a Spill

Aaron Hardeman is an Environmental Service Worker for Touchpoint at St Johns Macomb hospital. One afternoon **Hardeman** was emptying trash receptacles into a container that leaked on to the floor. **Hardeman** was not aware

that the container had leaked. He left the area to go to the rest room. There was a complaint made and **Hardeman** was given a corrective action.

Hardeman contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on his behalf. The grievance was successfully argued at the step three (3) meeting and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint – Macomb 8 Hours Pays the Bills

Ebony Boykins is a Food Service Worker for Touchpoint at St Johns Macomb hospital. **Boykins** was not contacted to work an extra shift and the shift was given to a less senior coworker.

Boykins contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted and **Boykins** was paid eight (8) hours.

Touchpoint – Macomb Disciplined for Being Ill

Dejah Young is an Environmental Service Worker for Touchpoint at St John Macomb hospital. **Young** received a corrective action for attendance. **Young** had excused absences that were not credited and they were counted against her.

Young contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on her behalf. During the grievance meeting it was agreed that the absences were documented incorrectly. The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint – Oakland Poor Job Performance – By Supervisor

Lazaro Buenaventura is an Environmental Service Worker for

(Continued on page 9)

Touchpoint at St Johns Oakland hospital. **Buenaventura** was accused of failing to complete a part of his job assignment. **Buenaventura** contacted Chief Steward **Louversa Fair** who filed a grievance on his behalf.

Buenaventura denied not completing his work assignment but during the grievance meeting it was pointed out that management did not follow the contract when imposing this corrective action. The contract reads that management forfeits their right to discipline if they do not give notice of discipline within twenty-one (21) days of the event. The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint – Macomb Bed Cleaning

Rhonda Johnson is an Environmental Service Worker for Touchpoint at Macomb hospital. **Johnson** works third (3rd) shift, and one night **Johnson's** work performance was questioned by her supervisor. **Johnson** was accused of not cleaning a bed thoroughly enough.

Johnson contacted chief steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted at the first (1st) step and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint – Macomb Performance Reconsidered

Meagan Malerbi is an Environmental Service worker for Touchpoint at Macomb hospital. **Malerbi** was accused of poor work performance and given a corrective action.

Malerbi had a grievance filed for her by chief steward **Blenda Coward**. The grievance was granted at the first (1st) step and the discipline was removed.



MGL RN & Technical Units Flexible Spending Accounts Get More Flexible

Flexible spending accounts (FSA) allow employees to use pre-tax money from their paycheck to pay for qualifying medical and child care expenses. The downside is that any money that has not been spent by the end of the calendar year goes to the employer. The IRS rules allow an employer to put a provision in the plan giving employees the option to carry over up to \$500 into the next year. Years ago Local 459 tried to have MGL to add this provision. MGL refused but did agree that if they did it for non-Union, they would do it for Union employees. In 2016, McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) offered employees in their MyChoice insurance plans the option to carry over \$500 in their FSA into the next year. MGL POST and non-union employees are in the MyChoice plan. RNs and Technical employees are not.

RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** and Technical Chief Steward **Kerry Miller** filed class action grievances on behalf of their bargaining units. They pointed out language in both their Union contracts stated – “If the Employer amends the plan for other employees to allow for reimbursement of expenses beyond the current twelve (12) month period, it shall amend the plan for bargaining unit employees in the same manner.” They contended the hospital was violating the contracts by denying the carryover to the RNs and Technical employees after granting it to other MGL employees. They reminded HR that staff in these bargaining units stood to lose thousands of dollars. The hospital argued they were not entitled to the

carryover because they were under other health insurance plans. **Murray** and **Miller** countered that there was nothing in the contracts that linked this change to particular insurance plans. MGL then tried to hide behind a technicality. Management contended that each bargaining unit was split into its own individual plan years ago and, therefore, “the plan” for that bargaining unit was not changed. Local 459 responded that at the time the language was initially negotiated, everyone was in a single plan. And the intent was that Union employees would receive the same option as other employees. In addition, **Murray** and **Miller** emphasized the hospital never notified the Union about the change to the plans.

Human Resources denied the grievances. MGL then offered to settle the grievances by trading reimbursing employees who lost money for not allowing the \$500 carryover in the future. **Murray** and **Miller** declined the offer. The Local 459 Executive Board approved the grievances for arbitration. A few days before the arbitration hearing, Human Resources essentially granted the grievance. MGL agreed to deposit the over \$13,000 in lost funds back into employees' flexible spending accounts, to allow the \$500 carryover in future years, and to grant the RNs and Technical employees any new enhancements to the MyChoice flexible spending accounts.

Sign up for OPEIU Text Alerts

Receive information about your Local and issues that are important to you and your family by signing up to receive text messages from Local 459 on your mobile device.

There are two easy ways to sign up. Visit opeiu.org and click on the “Sign Up for Mobile Alerts” button or Text OPEIU to 97779.

Bargaining Unit Spotlight

McLaren Greater Lansing Technical Bargaining Unit

Local 459 represents the Technical Bargaining Unit at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL). There are approximately 182 members with highly specialized skill-sets, and combined years of experience. The Technical Bargaining Unit members include:

Anesthesia Techs, responsible for a variety of procedures including Cardiopulmonary Bypass and support, auto transfusion, physiological Monitoring/Analysis, Stat Labs, and Emergency Preparedness.

Bio-Med/Clinical Engineering Techs, responsible for the purchase operation, safety, maintenance and quality assurance of patient care equipment.

Dosimetrists, responsible for performing dose calculations, assisting in preparing radiation therapy plans, equipment checks and calibrations.

Cardiovascular Techs, responsible for providing direct patient care, assisting the physician as a scrub tech/monitor tech, circulating tech, operating sophisticated technical equipment,

properly using complex medical supplies, obtaining diagnostic-quality images and accurate hemodynamic data.

Echo Cardiographers, operates ultrasound diagnostic equipment to produce pictures of heart, reviews results and prepares reports for physician review.

Orthopedic Techs, responsible for and maintains orthopedic devices and equipment for surgical services, provides orthopedic services to other departments, maintaining orthopedic supply inventory and filling physician orders for special equipment, and transporting and transferring patients in traction or orthopedic devices.

Polysomnography Techs, responsible for the personal care and environment of patients in the Sleep/Wake Center, performs diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

Respiratory Therapists, responsible for the delivery of respiratory therapy and patient care, performs therapeutic and diagnostic pulmonary and cardiovascular procedures, evaluates patient/resident response to respiratory therapy.

Radiology Techs, performs diagnostic radiographic services, operate all imaging equipment including vascular functions, positioning patients, immobilizing patients, calculating exposure factors, practicing radiation protection, evaluating images for technical quality, assists with contrast media and assists physician with imaging procedures.

CT Tech, performs routine and specialized CT exams, assist the radiologist/physician in performing special CT procedures.

Mammography Tech, responsible for providing patient services, using imaging modalities, performing mammographic procedures, evaluating mammograms for technical quality, operating imaging equipment, and positioning patients.

MRI Tech, performs routine and specialized MRI exams, assist the radiologist/physician in performing special MRI procedures.

Nuclear Med Tech, performs in-vivo and in-vitro diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine procedures, prepares radiopharmaceutical for administration and operates radiation detection and imaging equipment.

Radiation Oncology Therapist, administers radiation therapy treatments, uses simulation equipment to localize tumors and set treatment parameters, fabricated immobilization devices and treatment aids.

Ultra Sound Tech, performs a wide variety of sonographic exams and/or assisting the physician in performing these exams, assists the radiologist/physician in performing special sonographic procedures,

Surgical Technologists and First Assists, prepares and sets up operating room and/or Labor and Delivery Suite, responsible surgeons' preference cards, maintains knowledge and competency for all instrumentation, assists surgical team during operative procedures, performs terminal cleaning of operating rooms between cases, and assists surgeon with applying dressing and patient positioning.

Vascular Tech, responsible for diagnostic testing in the vascular lab, transports, maintains and coordinates repair of equipment, conducts comprehensive testing including vascular doppler's and ultrasounds.



Technical Negotiations Steering Committee

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Bargaining Unit Spotlight

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Each of these specialists carries a varying number of degrees, licensures, registries, and certifications needed to perform their individually unique job duties.

Hospitals depend greatly upon these specialists, as some of their departments are completely governed by the Technologists/Therapists. They are technologists because they know their equipment and instrumentation like they know the back of their hand. With that skill, they bridge the gap

between physician/surgeon and patient. The physicians/surgeons greatly depend on them to know how to plan and execute each and every step of a procedure/test, precisely tailored to each and every idiosyncrasy.

Techs often work long hours; night and day, snowstorms or heatwaves, exposed to biohazardous waste, (radiation, secretions, blood borne pathogens, mucus, vomit, urine, and feces)

The Technical Bargaining Unit joined Local 459 in 1997 and has been going strong ever since. If you would like more information, please call (517) 887-8844, visit us on Facebook at OPEIU Local 459Techs, or email kmiller@local459.org

Nurses Council

Nurses Take DC

The grassroots group, Nurses Take DC, held a rally on the capitol steps to promote support for HR 2392 Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patients Safety and Quality Care Act of 2017. This bill would make staffing ratios a Federal law and allow nurses whistle blower protection when they report unsafe staffing. It would also make hospitals make public their staffing ratios. If they were not compliant they would leave medical reimbursement money on the table which gives this some teeth.

Speakers included Congresswoman **Jan Schakowsky** from Illinois who sponsored the bill and others who have worked to support this. They had an educational session to teach nurses how to talk to their representatives and encouraged everyone to do it. Local 459 Chief Steward **Julie Murray** and MGL RN **Kyra Keusch** participated in the rally. **Murray** was a featured speaker and spoke about the Nurses Honor Guard. Many people have contacted **Murray** in the past couple years after she attended this event and she has been able to help several around the country get started.

Murray encourages everyone to use all forms of communication to write, email, Tweet, Facebook and visit their representatives to support this bill. In order to get their attention she advises we get volumes of people to do this as the sheer numbers will make them take notice. It is important to do this more than once. Keep the pressure on them. Let them know we represent a strong voting block and this bill affects everyone as we all will be a patient someday.

Please visit the Nurses Take DC Facebook page as well as the OPEIU Local 459 Nurses page to see highlights of the event. **Murray** told the crowd that we at Local 459 negotiated staffing ratios in our



contract but we also need this legislation to pass to make it more powerful. Remember **Alice Walker** said "The most common way people give up their power is by believing they don't have any." We believe we have a lot of power by being members of OPEIU.

From the President's Desk



By Sharon Taylor, Local 459 President

Why should you care about Gerrymandering?

Are you tired of the bad roads? Do you feel like your paycheck is too small? Do you feel like your patient load is too heavy? Do you feel like your healthcare is too expensive? Name an issue and gerrymandering affects it. Infrastructure, healthcare, tax cuts, mental health funding, schools, workplace safety...they are all affected by gerrymandering. How? Because all of these things are affected by who is in elected office and who is in office is determined largely by gerrymandering.

What exactly is gerrymandering? Every 10 years the United States completes a census. The census is called for in the Constitution and one of the things the census does is to help apportion the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Gerrymandering is the idea of drawing the maps for those 435 seats for political advantage. Whoever draws the maps tries to make sure their voters are in the majority in each district and lumps opposing voters so their votes don't go as far. It's been going on for over 100 years and it doesn't matter which party is drawing the maps, they all draw them to favor their own view. Just because it happens doesn't make it right.

Gerrymandering in Michigan is amongst the worst in the nation according to multiple sources. In 2016, Democrats won over half of the votes for state House, but as we all know they do not control the state legislature. How can this happen? It happens all over the country when politicians decide where district lines should be drawn. Politicians are deciding whose vote they want to count.

Last year a bi-partisan group here in Michigan calling themselves Voters not Politicians decided that we the people should make decisions about redistricting in the future. They began collecting signatures to get a ballot proposal on the November 2018 ballot to amend the state Constitution to give the power for reapportionment to an independent citizen's redistricting commission. The group collected more than 450,000 signatures between August and December 2017 to put a measure on the ballot to develop an independent citizens redistricting commission for state legislative and congressional districts. The ballot measure outlines how the commissioners will be chosen as well as who is eligible to serve on the commission.

The idea must be a good one because the current administration and many others are fighting it in court. If you google gerrymandering Michigan you can get more than your fill of news and opinions on the proposal and the legal fights. I urge you each to do your research about this and I think many of you will agree with me that the future of working people is dependent on who draws our district lines.

Getting active

It's time for Local 459 members to get politically active. Whether it's working to change gerrymandering or working for a political candidate. Right here and now we are at a crucial point in Michigan, where every member of Local 459 is going to be affected by who does and does not get elected and who draws the maps to determine congressional and state legislative districts. Whether you work at a hospital or mental health or a credit union or other public or private employer these things affect you.

There are almost 3,000 Local 459 members in Michigan and over 6,000 OPEIU members. I'm aware that we are all individuals and have our own needs and opinions, but, together we have significant numbers. This is the reason that I'm hearing from politicians almost daily asking for our endorsement. As most of you know Local 459 has not endorsed candidates in the past, but, we have rated candidates in the capitol area on their support of working people like you and I.

I urge each and every one of you to do your research and get involved in some way. Work on the gerrymandering proposal. Work for a political candidate that supports working people. Work with the Political Action Committee to determine who supports working families. Knock on doors, call fellow union members, hold a house party for a candidate, circulate petitions, do anything, but, don't let your voice go unheard!