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## Union agrees to 2 percent wage cut at Quincy Medical Center

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## Service workers agree to temporary wage reduction at Quincy Medical Center

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QUINCY —

A union that represents nearly 500 service workers at Quincy Medical Center has agreed to a temporary wage reduction of 2 percent in return for a six-month extension of seniority language and other provisions in their contract.

Members of the Service Employees International Union Local 1199 voted last week to approve the wage cut. Jeff Hall, a spokesman for SEIU Local 1199, said the new contract affects 474 members.

Most other Quincy Medical Center employees have already seen their wages cut by 3 percent because of the hospital management's decision to impose wage reductions throughout the hospital in March to address a major budget shortfall.

The Massachusetts Nurses Association's negotiations were resolved differently than the SEIU's talks with the hospital. In the nurses' case, the hospital declared an impasse in negotiations in April and imposed the 3 percent wage cut on the MNA members. The union, which represents about 300 nurses at the hospital, then filed an unfair labor charge with the National Labor Relations Board. The federal agency is still reviewing that complaint.

In the SEIU's case, Hall said the members agreed to the 2 percent wage reduction because it was temporary and the agreement provided stability by extending other contract terms – such as job security and seniority issues – through next March. Their current contract was set to expire at the end of September.

“The agreement keeps the overwhelming majority of the contract ... and extends key contract benefits through this period of transition (for the hospital),” Hall said. “Folks felt that was important as the hospital figures out how to right itself.”

Another part of the agreement calls for the continuation of a freeze on the hospital's contribution to SEIU members' 403(b) retirement plans through next March, Hall said. The wage cut took effect on June 13, and is set to expire at the end of March as well.

“The Quincy Medical Center has a very difficult financial situation right now, and our members agreed to temporary adjustments to their contract with that in mind,” Hall said.

A Quincy Medical Center spokesman said the hospital, which employs nearly 1,100 people, was on track to lose \$3.5 million in its current fiscal year. The spokesman said these measures are being taken to mitigate the potential budget shortfall.

David Schildmeier, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Nurses Association, said the union is negotiating with the hospital on staffing changes, including some layoffs. That were announced earlier this month.

“Our main concern is that they don’t have enough nurses to deliver the care that the nurses feel is appropriate,” Schildmeier said. “We’re doing our best to work with them to see how we can work this out.”

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