

**Safe
Staffing**

SAVES LIVES

After four months of bargaining, HPAE Local 5105 and Virtua Memorial have tentatively agreed to the following changes subject to ratification by the members.

**YOUR HPAE BARGAINING TEAM RECOMMENDS
A YES VOTE ON THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT**

In this historic contract we achieved:

- ✓ **Enforceable Nurse to Patient Ratios for M/S, BH, ICU and PCU!**
- ✓ **Additional Staff and resources in the ED and MCH.**
- ✓ **Wage increases averaging approximately 16.5% between now and June 2028.**
- ✓ **Improved Safety and Security throughout the hospital.**
- ✓ **Commitments to reduce HET going forward AND a grievance settlement giving anyone who got Unpaid HET between Sept. 25, 2025 and May 31, 2026 PTO time for all such hours (whether unpaid or if PTO was used).**
- ✓ **NO GIVE BACKS!**

For the first time, our Union won the following ENFORCEABLE MINIMUM NURSE TO PATIENT RATIOS effective January 3, 2027:

- **Med/Surg – 1:5**
- **Critical Care – 1:2**
- **PCU – 1:4** (with a commitment to bedside monitors by Jan 2027)
- **Behavioral Health – 1:6** (+ staff member dedicated to q15 minute checks.)
- **Expedited arbitration process to hold management accountable**
- **Leader or Supervisor must document efforts to bring staffing back to contractual levels as soon as possible during the shift when they are outside of the ratios – must be provided to Union upon request.**

We also won additional language to help with staffing in the hospital:

- **ED**
Clinical Support Nurse: In addition to the ED staffing numbers for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to support clinical needs of the department.
Additional Staff – a minimum of 3 additional positions will be created and posted in addition to the staff needed to fill the Clinical Support Nurse assignment.

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- **MCH**
Float Resource Nurse in addition to the MCH staffing numbers to assist with c-section deliveries, deliveries that require neonatal attendance, the stork nurse, and unexpected acuity changes.
Additional Staff – a minimum of 2 additional positions will be created and posted in addition to the staff needed to fill the Float Resource Nurse assignment.
- **Tools Available to Upstaff Mid-Shift:** including **Expanded Voluntary On-call: Med/Surg, BH, ED, ICU, PCU, L & D, M/B, SCN and Peds** – minimum of 2 positions per shift for Med/Surg and one position per unit per shift for all others. Charge nurses in ED, Peds Pavilion and L & D will have the authority to implement on call without prior management approval. (Cannot sign-up for Voluntary On-Call if potential to work more than 16 consecutive hours.)
- **PACU Weekend Coverage:** Establishes 2 weekend positions in the PACU. Night shift will continue to be covered by on call.

Wages and Other Economics:

- **Wages:** First Pay full pay period following May 31: All staff including **FT, PT & PD:**
 - 2026 (Retroactive) – Average increase of 8%**
 - New Step 31 added to scale
 - \$1.25 per hour Market Rate Adjustment (MRA) added to base hourly rate
 - 4% increase to base hourly rate after MRA
 - Step Movement (avg. = 1.25%)
 - 2027 – Average increase of 4.25%**
 - 3% increase to base hourly rate
 - Step Movement (avg. = 1.25%)
 - 2028 – Average increase of 4.25%**
 - 3% increase to base hourly rate
 - Step Movement (avg. = 1.25%)
- **Charge Pay:** increase to \$2.00 retroactive to first full pay period after May 31.
- **Weekend Staffing Positions:** Entitled to one paid HET Day per contract year AND will no longer lose their premium when they work only one of their weekend shifts due to being cancelled one of the shifts that weekend.

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Health and Safety:

- **Panic Buttons:** A commitment to add additional hard wired panic buttons and additional wearable devices (or alternatives) for staff throughout the hospital.
- **Signage:** Post signs per Healthcare Heros Act – clearly notifying patients and visitors of potential fine or imprisonment.
- **Visitor ID System:** Language requiring Virtua to Implement a visitor identification system and Increase screening for weapons and other prohibited items.
- **Infectious Disease Notification:** Clearer process for members to get information about potential exposures and commitment for timely responses to member questions sent to Infectious Disease department.
- **Workplace Violence:** Language that provides for paid time to all victims and witnesses of workplace violence for filing police reports and attending to court proceedings related to the incident.

HET:

- **HET Grievance Settlement:** All members that received unpaid HET (whether PTO was used or not) from Sept. 25, 2025 through May 31, 2026 receive PTO time for all such hours (whether unpaid or if PTO was used).
- Commitment to allowing employees to use alternatives to HET, including voluntary on call, participation in educational modules and floating to another department to assist with patient care.
- A commitment to systematize and expand the use of voluntary HET.
- **ICU Working Group:** Creates a working group for the Union and the Hospital to discuss how to adjust to changing census and reduce the use of HET.

Other Important Wins:

- **Bereavement:** Add Grandparent In-Law to qualifying immediate family members.
- **Holiday Schedules:** Clarified process for Holiday Scheduling and added language that encourages managers to reevaluate staffing needs leading up to holiday weeks.
- **Donation of PTO:** Added language that provides for clear confirmation of donated PTO within 2 pay periods (effective January 2027).
- **Disciplines** -- Require notice to the Union when members are reported to BON under “Cullen Law.” Require employer to send an amended report when an arbitrator determines that the discipline was not with Just Cause or the employer otherwise determines the report was not accurate due to subsequent information.
- **Virtual Nurses and AI:** Language on Virtual Nurses and Artificial Intelligence that add protections for our members as this technology develops
- **Preceptors:** Language that clarifies that primary preceptors are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback during the orientation process.
- **Observed Holidays:** Clarifies timing of observed holidays in procedural units not open on weekends and provides for double on-call pay (holiday on-call) on observed holidays.

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Other Revisions to current CBA:

- **Dress Code:** We agree to return to blue scrubs starting July 5th. Virtua agrees to a one-time payment of \$500 for **ALL** FT nurses and \$250 for all PT and PD nurses regardless of where you work.
- **Reassignment Guidelines:** Moved language from ICU side-letter to body of CBA and established that if a new hire chooses to work a bonus shift on another unit, they waive exemption from floating.
- **Internship Program:** Change name of program from Internship to Fellowship.
- **Per Diem Weekend Work Requirement:** Current weekend Per-Diem requirements remain the same for all current PDs (“Grandfathered”) but is codified to 12 hours per four-week schedule for new per diems **after** June 1, 2026.
- **ENDO (Modification to Endo Side letter):** If the employer creates a plan to staff endoscopies with an RN and a Tech, union and management must come to an agreement on the effects of the change. Ensures no layoffs of ENDO staff.
- **Duration:** 3-year contract (Expires May 31, 2029)
- **Holiday Scheduling:** Removed conflicting language.
- **NJ Family Leave:** Updated language to reflect change scheduled to become effective July 17, 2026.
- **Union Meetings:** Replace Medical Library with area near employee entrance as place to hold “union meetings.”
- **Information sent to Union:** Provide information to union monthly instead of quarterly.

Things Virtua Proposed that We Beat Back:

- **Reduce our Work Preference rights** by only allowing employees to bump agency nurses if it doesn’t cost them money.
- **New limitation of Transfers: New to practice in a specialty area cannot transfer units or change status for 12 Months.**
- **WEEKEND MAKE-UP** – Give *manager discretion* to require members to make-up weekend call-out – currently can only be required if it is the second weekend call-out in six months.
- **Sleep time:** A proposal to eliminate paid sleep time and force our members to use PTO.

Side Letters Renewed without Modification:

Side Letter 1 – LPNs

Side Letter 2 – Non-Supervisory Status

Side Letter 3 – Infection Prevention Manager

Side Letter 4 – Ambulatory Surgery Department Employees Only

Side Letter 5 – Staffing Committee

Side Letter 7 – Virtua Nurse Professional Development Advancement Program (PDAP)

Side Letter 8 – CNS Bargaining Unit

Side Letter 11 – Pandemic Preparedness & Review Committee

Side Letter 12 – MBU / Storking