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Myths vs. Facts

Before you vote, get the facts about the Swedish Edmonds proposal

Learn how the Swedish Edmonds proposals offer caregivers more choices of benefits and a continued voice in staffing. You can view a summary of the Swedish Edmonds wage and benefits proposals [here](#). You can also catch up on past issues of *Negotiation News* by visiting www.swedish.org/negotiation-news.

Myths	Facts
<p>Myth: Swedish Edmonds is not keeping up with Seattle's minimum wage law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though the Seattle minimum-wage mandate does not apply to Edmonds, all Swedish Edmonds caregivers make more than \$11 per hour, which is Seattle's current minimum wage. Our lowest pro-tech wage is \$12.90. • Seattle's \$15 minimum wage does not take effect until 2017. • Even so, 98.75% of Edmonds caregivers already make more than \$15 per hour. • Only 14 of our 1,119 represented caregivers at Swedish Edmonds make less than \$15 per hour. • Here is a breakdown of average Swedish Edmonds wages: R.N.s \$42.15 per hour, pro-tech \$26.63 per hour.
<p>Myth: Wage proposal doesn't keep up with the 2.3% consumer price index.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an initial offer, Swedish proposed increases of 14.5-16.5% over 4 years. • This includes average annual step increases of 2.5-3% plus additional proposed increases of 1.5% this year and another 1% each year in 2016, 2017 and 2018. • This means most caregivers would receive at least 3.5% increases each year.
<p>Myth: Swedish is "attacking" sick and vacation benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are NO proposed changes to the current annual leave and sick plan for any current caregivers. We have specifically proposed that current caregivers can choose to keep the annual leave and sick leave plans with no changes. • A new paid leave plan would be offered to new hires as of 1/1/16. • The new plan is designed to attract qualified job candidates to Swedish. It would give new hires more time off flexibility and more reliable income protection for any short-term disability, including maternity leaves or recurring illness. • If current caregivers want to participate in the new plan, they would get a one-time opportunity to choose the new plan if it makes sense for them.
<p>Myth: The proposed HSA medical plan is unaffordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Swedish HSA (health savings account) plan offers \$0 premium shares for caregiver-only coverage and low premium shares for dependent coverage (\$24 twice a month for full-time caregivers covering a whole family). • With seed money from Swedish and the wellness incentive, full-time caregivers would have a net deductible in 2016 of \$0 for caregivers only and \$800 for families. In 2016 and 2017, the net deductible would be \$800 for caregivers only and \$1,600 for families. • The HSA would not be the only plan available to caregivers. In addition, Swedish has proposed a new Swedish Group Health HMO (something the union asked for). Swedish also committed to keeping the Swedish PPO with no changes through the end of 2016. • That means caregivers would have a choice of three plans during open enrollment this fall. They can choose the plan that best meets their needs.

<p>Myth: Swedish is attempting to “bust” the union by not paying union members for bargaining.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swedish is not required by law to pay union members for bargaining, and most employers do not pay for bargaining. • Swedish has already paid for the set number of bargaining hours that was agreed to in the current contracts. The union has used up all those funds. Most of it has gone toward union caucusing and toward paying more than 100 SMC caregivers to attend Edmonds bargaining. • Swedish doesn’t believe adding more paid hours will lead to a timely resolution of negotiations and doesn’t intend to renew the paid bargaining language in the new contracts. We want to encourage both sides to be efficient at the bargaining table so we can get a deal done before the contracts expire on June 30.
<p>Myth: Swedish refuses to invest in safe staffing and prefers to use temporary labor to avoid benefit costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swedish is investing heavily in safe staffing. The primary issue is that qualified nurses are in short supply. • Short-term, we are using agency, travelers and overtime to staff our units when we have an increased census, multiple vacations, sick calls and open positions. • Long-term, however, our commitment is to hire more permanent caregivers. That is why Swedish Edmonds is recruiting 200 new permanent hires this year. • Expanding our workforce now will support current and future volume growth and help us prepare for the impending nurse shortage.
<p>Myth: Swedish is trying to profit from caregiver training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swedish has committed to contributing more than \$2.3 million per year to training and education. This is key to helping us fill open positions. • Swedish has asked for assurances that all Swedish contributions to the SEIU multi-employer training fund be used exclusively for Swedish caregivers for skills we need. • Without those assurances, Swedish would take the same amount of money and start its own training fund, and 100% of the contributions would go toward training and education for our caregivers. But again, we are willing to continue contributing to the joint training fund with the assurances outlined above.
<p>Myth: Separate bargaining for the Edmonds and SMC contracts disrespects Edmonds caregivers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMC and Swedish Edmonds are separate legal entities with separate contracts. Negotiating the contracts independently ensures we maintain their separate status. • The union has chosen to have all 100 SMC representatives attend the Edmonds session and speak on behalf of Edmonds caregivers. How does that ensure Edmonds caregivers have a voice? They are only 10% of the people who are in the bargaining sessions that are meant to be dedicated to Edmonds. • Edmonds leadership remains very concerned that the voice of Edmonds is being drowned out by the needs of SMC in these negotiations.

Union declines Swedish offer to add two more sessions

With the contracts expiring on June 30, Swedish proposed adding two more bargaining dates to the schedule. The union declined the additional dates. That leaves only three sessions until the expiration date. We are disappointed the union did not agree to more dates. As we have stated to the union, in the first year of the contract our wage increases **will be effective the first payroll period following ratification of the contract**, and **Swedish does not intend to make those increases retroactive to June 30**. To ensure that our caregivers receive the wage increases as soon as possible, we need to get to the table and complete the new contract as soon as possible.