

UVMHC Administration Moves Forward with New Wave of Furloughs

On Friday, May 29th, VFNHP received formal notification of UVMHC's intent to seek additional temporary staffing reductions. The Administration listed two groupings;

- New furloughs that would result in just over a total of 19 FTEs ·
- An extension of some previously furloughed FTEs from the first round of reductions that occurred beginning in April, equaling just over 32 FTEs.

These two lists included a reduction of staff in the following Units: Neurology, VT Regional Sleep Center, Pediatric Neurology, Comprehensive Pain, Seneca, Family Medicine South Burlington, Hinesburg Family Practice, Baird 5, GIM & Geriatrics- Burlington & Williston, Total Joints, Foot & Ankle, SICU, Ophthalmology (Main Campus & Berlin), Plastics, Trauma & Critical Care, Medical Group Training, Nursing Research & Education, Nursing Outcomes, Practice & Systems, Vasc/Interventional Radiology, GI, ID, Cardiology, Clinical Neurophysiology, Chemical Dependency, VCH-Endo, VCH- Pulmonology, Endoscopy, Pediatric Primary Care, Foot & Ankle, Sports, ENT, CT Surgery, Urology, General Surgery, Pediatric Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Continence Center.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

You have the right for Union Representation in conversations with Management regarding furloughs. We strongly encourage you to have a witness to the discussion and to get any agreements made in writing.

For Questions or if you are in need of a Steward, contact:

**COVID19@ufnhp.org or
call (802)657-4040**



Procedure per

Our Nurse & Tech Contracts

1. The use of **Agency Nurses** in a cost center selected for layoff shall first be discontinued. (See Article 15.)
2. Then seek **relevant/applicable volunteers** for layoff or reduction. Volunteers shall be eligible for all vacant positions that they are qualified to perform. If there are not enough volunteers then,
3. **All Probationary employees** (new hires to the Hospital not veteran bargaining unit employees who are "probationary" or "orienting" to the Unit, department, site or office) or within the affected Unit or department, site or office in the affected Job Groups shall then be laid- off first, then,
4. Bargaining unit employees with a **suspension within the previous one (1) year** will be selected first, then bargaining unit employees with a **written warning within the previous one (1) year will be selected**. Bargaining unit employees laid off under this provision will not be eligible for the bumping procedure outlined in Article 16.E. If a bargaining unit employee laid off under this provision has his/her suspension or written warning overturned in the grievance process, the layoff will be rescinded.
5. Bargaining unit employees are selected in the **reverse order of Hospital seniority**.

What are bumping rights, and do I have them in a situation of an involuntary furlough?

Bumping is a contractual right that allows more senior bargaining unit members to "bump" those less senior. Bumping rights also can help protect against Management targeting staff in the reduction process. As of May 29th, the Administration has stated that they do not want to allow for bumping rights, which is a violation of our contracts and we are prepared to grieve. Please review the bumping procedure in our contracts under Article 16.

It is up to the individual bargaining unit member to exercise their bumping rights. If you are notified of an involuntary furlough or layoff via email or written letter, under our contracts, **you have 48 hours to inform Management of your intent to exercise bumping rights formally.** This request should be put made in writing and with the support of a VFNHP Steward. In the event of notification, verbally or written, of an involuntary furlough or layoff, please contact COVID19@vfnhp.org or call our office at 802-657-4040, as soon as possible.

CAN OUR UNIT WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO PROPOSE A REDUCTION IN THE NEEDED HOURS BY SHARING THE BURDEN?

Yes. Ophthalmology is an excellent example of this. The unit was notified of the need to reduce 1 FTE, and the staff worked together to create a rotating one-week furlough shared by all, to avoid one FTE taking the hit alone. The first step is to partner with your bargaining unit members, create a plan you can agree on, and present it to your direct Manager. We encourage you to work with a VFNHP Steward and have any plan written down and agreed to by all parties involved.

IF I VOLUNTEERED FOR A FURLOUGH, WOULD I BE GUARANTEED MY POSITION AND SCHEDULE WHEN I RETURN TO WORK?

There are no guarantees as to the position or schedule. It is uncharted territory, and the Hospital is not following the contract; therefore, it is imperative to access Union Representation in these discussions to serve as a witness to any agreements made.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS?

Unemployment insurance (UI) is administered by the state of Vermont, which means that the Vermont Department of Labor makes the final determination about who qualifies and the amount an applicant receives. Employees must apply for UI, and employers can support or attempt to block an employee's application for UI. You are much more likely to receive UI if your employer supports your application, but it is not guaranteed. You are much less likely to receive UI if your employer challenges your application, but you may still receive UI if the state decides in your favor. Many of the rules around UI have changed around eligibility because of COVID-19. For example, the Vermont maximum weekly benefit is \$513, but that has been supplemented by a \$600/week benefit from the federal government **until the end of July.** The rules around eligibility and maximum weekly benefits may change again. We are encouraging everyone who has lost work, either in total (or in part) because of COVID-19 to apply for UI. Please let us know at COVID19@vfnhp.org if your UI application is denied.