

## **New Contract Boosts RN Wages at Brattleboro Retreat Amid Nursing Shortage**

BRATTLEBORO, VT (November 1, 2018)—A newly ratified contract between the Brattleboro Retreat and the United Nurses and Allied Professionals (UNAP) local 5086 provides across the board pay increases along with market-based wage scale adjustments for nurses and other direct care staff.

The changes will result in meaningful pay increases for front line staff and will position the Retreat as a very strong player in a tight labor market that has been challenging for hospitals and healthcare providers both regionally and nationally.

“We believe this new contract, which covers more than 550 Retreat employees including nurses and mental health workers, sets a decidedly positive tone that establishes a new spirit of partnership between the union and management,” said Meghan Baston, chief nursing officer and senior vice president of Patient Care Services.

The agreement was hammered out over 11 bargaining sessions that union and management negotiating teams described as constructive and collaborative. Union members voted overwhelmingly to ratify the new contract on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

"In many ways this new contract is an historic step forward for the Retreat," said Daniel Watson, co-President of UNAP Local 5086 " It lays the foundation to address many important issues faced by current staff, while establishing competitive wages to attract much needed new front line employees. It is a victory for the Retreat, the Union, and especially for the patients."

Adding to the wage increases the new contract includes provisions to enhance work/life balance particularly around staff scheduling and vacation time.

“We’ve now established wages at or above the regional healthcare labor market for RNs, and our mental health workers will all be earning a minimum of \$15 an hour,” added Baston. “We simply feel we’re doing right by the people who do the profoundly meaningful work of caring for our patients, while also re-establishing the Brattleboro Retreat as a highly attractive employer in both local and regional markets.”

**The Brattleboro Retreat, founded in 1834, is a not-for-profit, regional specialty psychiatric hospital and addictions treatment center, providing a full range of diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitation services for individuals and families of all ages. Recognized as a leader in the treatment mental illness and addiction, the Brattleboro Retreat offers a high quality, individualized, comprehensive continuum of care including inpatient, partial hospitalization, residential and outpatient treatment.**

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