

Questions and Answers about CNA contract negotiation issues February 14, 2008

Is the County proposing to change the health care benefits for CNA members now employed?

The County is not proposing to change health benefits for CNA members currently employed. The County's proposal fixes the County's contribution for health premiums at the 2008 level. There are a number of factors beyond the county's control that could result in higher premiums in the future. To address that issue, the County is proposing the establishment of a Task Force, including CNA representatives, that would design a health benefits strategy that could expand options and provide CNA members with greater choice for how to spend the funds allocated for health premiums.

Is the County proposing to change health benefits for CNA members who are retired?

Current employees who retire and CNA members who are already retired will maintain their existing retiree health benefits under the County's current proposal.

Is the County proposing any strategies that would enhance nursing professionalism?

Yes. The County is proposing a clinical ladder.

CNA members have been participating on a design team at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center since July to explore how to better support professional practices and enhance quality care. One strategy the County is proposing to accomplish that is a career ladder.

A clinical ladder is a structured system to provide staff nurses' career advancement while remaining in the clinical setting, providing direct patient care. It is used to recognize professional development and differentiates levels of nursing expertise and contribution. A clinical ladder is a tool developed specifically to assist in reaching our vision for nursing. It is based on the Benner Model (*From Novice to Expert*) and incorporates the American Nurses' Association Standards of Professional Performance.

Additional information about Contra Costa Health Service, Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and the County's negotiations with the California Nurses Association is available on cchealth.org. Send questions to jfreestone@hsd.cccounty.us. Due to the confidential nature of the negotiations, specific details about the bargaining or terms cannot be discussed by County staff. CNA members should contact their local CNA representatives for additional details.

