

**2025 – 2027**

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**

**between the**

**STATE OF MONTANA  
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
MONTANA MENTAL HEALTH NURSING  
CARE CENTER**

**and the**

**MONTANA NURSES ASSOCIATION  
LOCAL UNIT # 14, AFL-CIO**

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**PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**  
**MONTANA MENTAL HEALTH NURSING CARE CENTER**  
**and the**  
**MONTANA NURSES ASSOCIATION**

**PREAMBLE**

**THIS AGREEMENT** is made and entered into by and between the State of Montana, for and on behalf of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, referred to as the Employer, and the Montana Nurses Association, referred to as the Association, or Union.

**ARTICLE 1.**  
**PURPOSE**

**Section 1.** The purpose of this Agreement is to (i) establish the hours of employment, wages, and other conditions of employment of registered nurses (RN) at the Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center, (ii) adopt measures for the settlement of disputes should they arise, and (iii) create and maintain an amicable relationship between the Employer and the nurses covered by this Agreement.

**Section 2.** It is further agreed that conditions contained herein related to RNs will apply to all of the members of the bargaining unit. No employee will be hired or retained under less than the wages and conditions set forth in this Agreement.

**ARTICLE 2.**  
**RECOGNITION**

**Section 1.** The Employer recognizes the Association or any successor organization as the sole and exclusive representative of all RNs employed by the Employer defined and certified by Montana State Board of Personnel Appeals. RNs shall be included within the bargaining unit unless mutually excluded for the purpose of collective bargaining with respect to salaries, rate of pay, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment.

**Section 2.** All managerial and supervisory personnel are excluded as certified by the Board of Personnel Appeals.

**ARTICLE 3.**  
**DEFINITIONS**

**Section 1.** Probationary Employees: Nurses are probationary for the first six (6) months of their employment. During probation, the employee may be terminated without

recourse to the grievance process. Notice of the dismissal or suspension will be given to the nurse in writing and must state the grounds for dismissal or suspension, but the grounds need not constitute just cause. At the end of three (3) months the nurse shall have the opportunity for a conference with the immediate supervisor to discuss their level of performance and further expectations.

**Section 2.** Full-time Employee: An employee who generally works thirty-six (36) to forty (40) hours per week.

**Section 3.** Part-time Employee: An employee who generally works less than thirty-six (36) to forty (40) hours per week.

**Subsection 1.** Relief RN. Generally, works less than twenty (20) hours per week and is occasionally able to pick up extra shifts.

**Section 4.** Business days mean Monday through Friday except holidays.

**Section 5.** Calendar days mean seven (7) days a week, Saturday through Friday.

## **ARTICLE 4. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** The Employer retains all rights to manage, direct, and control its business in all particulars as enumerated in § 39-31-303, MCA, except as such rights are expressly and specifically modified or waived by the terms of this Agreement. The Association and its members recognize the prerogatives of the Employer to operate and manage its affairs in such areas as but not limited to:

1. Directing employees;
2. Hiring, promoting, transferring, assigning, and retaining employees, layoff, suspension, termination, or other employment action;
3. Relieving employees from duties because of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient, or nonproductive;
4. Maintaining the efficiency of government operations;
5. Determining the methods, means, job classification, and personnel by which the Employer's operations are to be conducted;
6. Establishing the methods and processes by which work is performed;
7. Make and enforce reasonable rules for the maintenance of discipline;
8. Take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the mission of the Employer in situations of emergency, immediate jeopardy (defined by Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services) (CMS), a serious, unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action(s) necessary to remain in compliance with laws and regulations.

## **ARTICLE 5. PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** The Employer agrees that all matters relating to the practice of nursing at Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center will be in accordance with the Montana Nurse Practice Act, Addendum A and the Collective Bargaining for Nurses Act.

**Section 2.** The Association, on behalf of its members, agrees to cooperate with the Employer to attain and maintain full efficiency and maximum patient care. The Employer recognizes that the nurses are professionals and have professional interests and concerns.

**Section 3.** The authorized representatives of the Association or their representatives shall have access to the premises of the Employer in order to investigate or conduct Association business so long as the work of the employees does not become interrupted.

**Section 4.** The Employer shall supply bulletin board spaces at least large enough to hold two (2) 8 1/2"x 11" documents in places mutually agreed by the Employer and the Union for the Union to post items pertinent to Union business.

**Section 5.** Should an unsafe situation arise which requires immediate attention, an employee will follow the organizational chain of command.

**Section 6.** If, a resident poses a significant threat of harm to self and or others, the nurse shall follow appropriate chain of command, and the Employer will respond.

**Section 7.** The Association may use the Employer's facilities for Association meetings contingent on management approval for each request. Reasonable requests will not be denied. Approval or denial shall be provided no later than three (3) business days following the request.

**Section 8.** A maximum of two (2) nurses may be allowed subject to staffing requirements, the ability to use two (2) days of their accrued leave during Fall and Spring to attend the annual meeting of the Association. The requests shall not be unreasonably denied.

**Section 9.** The Employer shall provide just compensation for destruction of clothing, prosthetic devices or personal property when the loss or damage is caused as a result of aggressive patient behavior or a work-related accident or injury that is not the result of nurse negligence. Such loss must be reported to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Reimbursement will be a maximum of \$75 for clothes, watches, etc. Eyeglasses will be replaced on a like-for-like basis. Employee should first submit claim

for eyeglass replacement through Employer sponsored benefits if the Employee carries such benefit. The Employer agrees to compensate for the remainder of the uncovered benefit.

**Section 10.** The Employer shall provide to the Association, and each nurse access to an up-to-date policy manual on employment and clinical related matters. The policy and procedure manual shall be housed on each wing and made readily accessible to the nurses on duty.

**Subsection 1.** The nurses shall be notified of any change to policies issued by the Employer a minimum of fourteen (14) business days in advance on the HR bulletin board and in email to the Association to allow for discussion and comment. Nothing contained herein shall relieve the Employer of bargaining changes in working conditions with the Union.

**Section 11.** All nurses shall have an individual state email account and log-in password and have access to facility computers for clinically related purposes.

**Section 12.** Whenever members of the local unit are engaged in collective bargaining with the Employer specific to the Facility, three (3) members shall receive release time.

**Section 13.** An Association representative will be allowed up to thirty (30) minutes of time during new Employee orientation to orient the newly hired nurses to the contract and to the Association.

**Section 14.** The Facility and its employees shall follow DPHHS and Facility policies.

**Section 15.** Employee name tags and schedules shall list first name and last initial of the employee.

## **ARTICLE 6. MANAGEMENT SECURITY**

**Section 1.** The Employer and its employees are engaged in furnishing an essential public service which vitally affects the health, safety, comfort, and general well-being of the public and both parties hereto recognize the need for continuous and reliable service to the public. The Association and the Employer agree that there will be no stoppage of work or lockout during the term of this Agreement.

**Section 2.** Nothing in the above Section will be construed to mean that an individual nurse or group of nurses shall be compelled to cross an authorized picket line established by a recognized bargaining unit at this institution. However, should a court determine that such can be required, it is recognized that appropriate administrative and/or legal action may be initiated by management.

## **ARTICLE 7. EQUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**Section 1.** The Employer agrees that it will not discriminate against any nurse applicant or any nurse employee, either in hiring, promoting, or assigning to positions, or in regard to any other item or condition of employment, because of race, color, ancestry, religious or political belief, sex, age, marital status, or activity on behalf of the Association. All items contained within this Article are not subject to the provisions of Article 15 (Grievance and Arbitration) of the Agreement.

**Section 2.** In accordance with the provisions of Title 49, Chapter 3, MCA., "Montana Code of Fair Practices," the Employer shall recruit, appoint, assign, train, evaluate, and promote its employees on the basis of merit and qualification, without regard to race, color, ancestry, religious or political belief, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability. The Employer may not enter into any benefit plans such as retirement, pension, or insurance plans which may be construed as subterfuges to evade the purposes of the Code. However, the Employer may enter into a bona fide seniority system that is not structured to perpetuate any past discriminatory practices.

## **ARTICLE 8. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**Section 1.** Upon receipt of a written authorization from an employee covered by this Agreement, the Employer shall abide by the terms of the authorization and deduct from the employee's pay the amount owed to the Association by such employee for dues. The Employer will remit to the Association such sums within thirty (30) calendar days. Changes in the Association membership dues rate will be certified to the Employer in writing over the signature of the authorized officer or advance of such change.

**Subsection 1.** The Association shall provide local management with sufficient copies of the Association's membership payroll deduction cards so that each employee who is hired is provided with this form at date of hire.

**Subsection 2.** The Association agrees to make available to new hires a copy of the Agreement and such copies will be provided to the Employer and shall be given to new employees upon hire.

**Subsection 3.** The Employer will provide the Association with a list of newly hired and terminated employees at least monthly. The list may include mutually agreed upon pertinent member information and will be sent to the Association.

**Section 2.** A copy of this Agreement shall be given by the Association during the new employee orientation and after ratification of this Agreement. The Employer will notify the Local Unit's designee, in advance, with details of the upcoming orientation to include date, time, place and number of nurses. The Local Unit may use Employees' mailbox for delivery of Agreements and notices.

**Section 3.** When transferring from one agency to another within the Department of Public Health and Human Services, sick leave, annual leave, and accumulated holidays will transfer with the employee. When transferring from the Department of Public Health and Human Services to another agency, sick leave and annual leave will be transferred as provided by Department of Administration policy. Time as an employee in state, county, and city government will count towards annual leave accrual rate and P.E.R.S. retirement.

**Section 4.** Transfer from full-time to part-time will not affect the employee's continuous service record, and benefits will be prorated on a percentage basis in accordance with the number of hours worked as regulated by state law and policy.

**Section 5.** The Facility will provide T.B. testing and Hepatitis B Immunization according to the Facility policy.

**Section 6.** An Employee who is exposed or potentially exposed for example, a needle stick injury, to an infectious disease will be referred to an appropriate provider for medical evaluation and treatment if necessary.

**Section 7.** The annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all employees and will be provided by the Employer. No Employee will be subject to mandatory vaccines or immunizations by the Employer.

**Subsection 1.** Staff members may decline receiving influenza vaccination but will be required to follow masking requirements per CDC recommendation if they are direct-care givers or employees that will come in contact with residents and co-workers.

**Subsection 2.** The relevant dates of influenza season typically are October through April. The local influenza outbreak will be determined by Central Montana Health District, the Medical Director, or the Infection Prevention Nurse.

**Subsection 3.** Influenza policies are a mandatory subject of bargaining.

## **ARTICLE 9. HOURS OF WORK, SCHEDULING & COMPENSATION**

**Section 1.** Hours of work for twelve (12) hour shift nurses shall be twelve (12) hours per day and thirty-six (36) hours in a week.

Hours of work for ten (10) hour shift nurses shall be ten (10) hours per day and forty (40) in a week.

Hours of work for eight (8) hour shift nurses shall be eight (8) hours per day and forty (40) in a week.

**Section 2.** The parties acknowledge nurses may be interrupted during the lunch break to attend to urgent/emergent resident care matters. Nurses shall complete the appropriate form for compensation for time worked during lunch periods. The parties



acknowledge interrupted meal periods are not the norm. While supervisor(s) are on duty, charge nurses shall relinquish the charge nurse duties to the supervisor while the charge nurse is taking their lunch break.

**Subsection 1.** A dining area will be provided for employees.

**Section 3.** A rest period will be provided for fifteen (15) minutes during each four (4) hours worked.

**Section 4.** Schedules will be posted at least ten (10) calendar days in advance. Once schedules are posted, it is the responsibility of the employee to obtain coverage for any changes to their schedule, with the exception of sick leave or an emergency.

**Section 5.** Regularly scheduled FT nurses' schedules shall generally be repetitive in nature.

**Subsection 1.** When a schedule(s) is vacated or newly created, it shall be posted for seven (7) calendar days on the HR Board and next to the RN schedule. Nurses may apply and the schedule shall be awarded according to seniority.

**Subsection 2.** Every effort will be made to not schedule Employees to work more than two (2) weekends out of a twenty-eight (28) day schedule unless defined by their schedule pattern or with mutual agreement of the affected employees. Weekends mean Saturdays and Sundays. Employees shall not be scheduled to work split weekends unless mutually agreed upon.

**Section 6.** When an employee is assigned to temporary fill a Charge Nurse position, they will be paid a Charge Nurse Differential of \$3.00 an hour in addition to their base wage. When an employee is authorized to temporary fill a Charge Nurse position, they will be provided with the Charge Nurse phone, book and keys.

**Section 7.** A designated workweek is forty (40) hours. Workweeks begin at 0000 on Saturday and end at 2359 on Friday.

**Section 8.** Overtime as provided for in this Agreement shall not be pyramided under any circumstances.

**Section 9.** Shift Differentials

**Subsection 1.** Night Shift Differential. Employees who work no less than five (5) hours of their shift between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall be paid a wage differential of \$3.00 an hour in addition to their base hourly rate and in addition to any other applicable differentials.

**Subsection 2.** Weekend Shift Differential. Employees who work the weekend, which is defined as hours from 6:00 p.m. on Friday through 6:00 a.m. on Monday, shall be paid a wage differential of \$2.00 an hour in addition to their base hourly rate and in addition to any other applicable differentials.

ARTICLE 10.  
HOLIDAYS

**Section 1.** Section 1-1-216, MCA, mandates the following holidays:

January 1st.....	New Year's Day
3rd Monday in January.....	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3rd Monday in February .....	Presidents' Day
Last Monday in May .....	Memorial Day
July 4th.....	Independence Day
1st Monday in September .....	Labor Day
2nd Monday in October .....	Indigenous Peoples' Day and Columbus Day
November 11th.....	Veteran's Day
4th Thursday in November .....	Thanksgiving Day
December 25th.....	Christmas Day
Floating Holiday .....	Each calendar year

Each full-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year. Each part-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year that must be calculated proportionately to the floating holiday allowed to a full-time employee. Unused floating holiday leave expires at the end of each calendar year, does not accrue, and is not paid out to employees on termination of employment.

**Section 2.** Any eligible full-time employee who is scheduled for a day off on a day which is observed as a holiday, shall be entitled to receive a holiday (a holiday is defined as eight (8) hours), day banked.

**Section 3.** Part-time employees are entitled to pro-rated holiday benefits.

**Section 4.** Employees may accumulate a maximum of seven (7) holidays within a fiscal year. Accumulated holidays in excess of fifty-six (56) hours and unused holidays shall be paid at the straight-time rate in accordance with Facility policy.

**Section 5.** Holidays worked shall be compensated at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the employee's regularly scheduled rate of pay for all hours worked, and an additional one (1) day (eight (8) hours) of banked holiday time, which can be used at a later date, as approved by management. Such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

ARTICLE 11.  
LEAVES

**Section 1.** Employees of the bargaining unit are entitled to sick leave benefits as set forth for all State employees in § 2-18-618, MCA, in policy as promulgated by the Department of Administration and the Employer, and per Facility policy. Approval of sick leave shall not be unreasonably denied.

**Subsection 1.** In the event an employee becomes ill while taking annual leave, the Employee shall be afforded the right to change annual leave to sick leave and to use available sick leave credits upon furnishing appropriate medical certification to the Employer.

**Subsection 2.** Sick leave charges and credits will be charged to the nearest half hour.

**Subsection 3.** In nursing positions which require replacement, the employee or their agent will inform their charge nurse or the supervisor on duty that illness will prevent them from reporting to duty at least two (2) hours before the employee's shift is to begin. The parties recognize the importance of reporting an absence or late report as soon as possible to optimize success of finding a replacement employee. Absence in excess of one (1) shift without receipt of proper notification by the Employer from the employee shall constitute just cause for immediate discharge unless the failure to give such notification was due to legitimate circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

**Subsection 4.** Medical documentation is required when there is a reasonable, documented suspicion of sick leave abuse.

**Subsection 5.** Employees will be granted family and medical leave and procedures shall be in accordance with state and federal law and, specifically pursuant to the provisions set forth in § 2-18-606, MCA.

**Subsection 6.** Maternity leave shall be granted according to the provisions set forth in §§ 49-2-310 and 49-2-311, MCA.

**Subsection 7.** Employees shall be granted military leave as prescribed by § 10-1-1009, MCA, and state policy. This leave may not be charged against the employee's annual vacation time.

**Subsection 8.** Release time is defined as time an employee is relieved from scheduled duties and work to attend another function.

**Subsection 9.** In the event that a holiday falls when an employee is on sick leave, the employee shall be changed from sick leave status to holiday status.

**Subsection 10.** An employee who terminates employment with the facility is entitled to a lump sum payment equal to one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the sick leave pay.

**Section 2.** Leave without pay shall be in accordance with Montana Operating Manual and the Facility's policy.

**Section 3.** The parties agree that continuing education is important for staff development.

**Subsection 1.** When employees are required by management to attend workshops, training sessions, or conferences, they will be paid salary, transportation, per diem, and lodging according to state law and policy. The Facility will make a good faith effort to allow all employees covered by this contract an equal opportunity to attend workshops, training sessions, and conferences throughout all levels of the professional nursing staff.

**Subsection 2.** Each full-time employee will be entitled to a maximum of sixteen (16) hours per year leave with pay to attend job-related continuing education workshops, seminars, etc. Part-time employees shall receive a prorated portion of the full-time employee's benefit in accordance with the average number of hours worked per pay period based on a minimum of six pay periods. Employees may be required to participate in in-service training classes to pass along information obtained through this process.

**Subsection 3.** Management retains the authority to determine the number of nurses to be given off time to enable appropriate staffing coverage. Such leave shall be subject to approval to enable the efficient operation of the facility, to ensure patient care will not be jeopardized, and that budget limitations are not exceeded. Requests to attend such trainings will not be unreasonably denied.

**Section 4.** Paid leave for disaster relief volunteer service governed by § 2-18-627, MCA.

**Section 5.** Jury Duty per § 2-18-619, MCA, provides:

1. An employee who is under proper summons as a juror shall collect all fees and allowances payable as a result of the service and forward the fees to the appropriate accounting office. Juror fees shall be applied against the amount due the employee from their employer. However, if an employee elects to charge their juror time off against their annual leave, they shall not be required to remit their juror fees to their employer. In no instance is an employee required to remit to their employer any expense or mileage allowance paid to them by the court.
2. An employee subpoenaed to serve as a witness shall collect all fees and allowances payable as a result of the service and forward the fees to the appropriate accounting office. Witness fees shall be applied against the amount due the employee from their employer. However, if an employee elects to charge their witness time off against their annual leave they shall not be required to remit their witness fees to their employer. In no instance is an employee required to remit to their employer any expense or mileage allowances paid to them by the court.
3. Employers may request the court to excuse their employees from jury duty if they are needed for the proper operation of a unit of state or local government.

4. Employees answering subpoenas in connection with their official duties will be compensated their regular rate of pay for time spent testifying and preparing (with the State's legal team).

**Section 6.** Section 2-18-611, MCA, provides:

1. Each full-time employee of the state or any county or city thereof is entitled to and shall earn annual vacation leave credits from the first full pay period of employment. An employee must be credited with one year of service for each period of two-thousand-eighty (2080) hours of service following their date of employment; an employee must be credited with eighty (80) hours of service for each biweekly pay period in which they are in a pay status or on an authorized leave of absence without pay regardless of the number of hours of service in a pay period. Proportionate vacation leave credits shall be earned and credited at the end of each pay period. However, employees are not entitled to any vacation leave with pay until they have been continuously employed for a period of six (6) calendar months.
2. Permanent part-time employees are entitled to pro-rated annual vacation benefits if they have been continuously employed for six (6) calendar months.

**Section 7.** Accumulation of leave, cash for unused leave and employee transfer are governed by § 2-18-617, MCA.

## **ARTICLE 12. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

**Section 1.** Management will hold regularly scheduled nursing staff meetings. The Employer may require employees to attend certain meetings/in-services. In-services will be provided to all employees during respective shifts, as staffing patterns permit. Should the meeting be of a routine nature and attendance is required, the Employer will provide a minimum of ten (10) business days advance written notice.

**Subsection 1.** Should the meeting/in-service be of an urgent nature for example to address issues regarding specific patient care or care delivery methods the ten (10) business day notice is not required.

**Subsection 2.** When employees attend a mandatory meeting outside of their scheduled shift, they will be paid for time spent at the meeting, or a minimum of two (2) hours.

**Section 2.** The Association will be notified of any change to the performance evaluation tool a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days in advance, in a PCC meeting, to allow for comment and discussion.

**Subsection 1.** Employees shall receive annual performance reviews in accordance with DPHHS policy and procedure. This evaluation shall be discussed jointly by the employee, the immediate supervisor and/or the appropriate management designee.

**Section 3.** New employees will be provided a period of orientation consisting of up to ten (10) working days; orientation may be concluded by mutual agreement of the nurse and the appropriate management designee if the employee is able to perform essential functions of the position independently as evidenced by completion of the orientation checklist. The orientation will be provided and conducted by the appropriate management designee and will cover all applicable areas of nursing practice within the Facility. Approximately half of the orientation shall be on the employees assigned shift. Orientation of new Employees shall be under the general guidance of permanent Facility nurse(s). If needed, additional orientation shifts will be granted upon mutual agreement.

**Section 4.** In the case of interdepartmental or promotional changes, orientation will be provided.

**Section 5.** Management will provide formal in-service trainings to all employees before new equipment and or new processes/procedures are introduced to the Facility.

**Section 6.** Upon successful completion, the Employer will reimburse RNs the current ANA member testing fee set by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the appropriate certifying body for the initial certification in one of the following psychiatric; mental health nursing; gerontology or other certifications as deemed appropriate by management.

**Section 7.** The Employer shall provide, at least once per calendar year, training by a qualified professional related but not limited to resident diagnoses, maladaptive resident behaviors and interventions, medications, and other treatment modalities. Training will be focused on providing a therapeutic environment for psychiatric/mental health/geriatric populations that MMHNCC serves, with a goal of reducing resident/staff injuries, and to promote a healing and therapeutic environment consistent with evidence-based best practices.

## **ARTICLE 13. SENIORITY**

**Section 1.** Seniority starts the date of hire into an RN bargaining unit position at the Facility. Employees currently covered by this collective bargaining agreement (CBA) before Local #14 was recognized shall have seniority defined as their date of hire into a position now covered by the CBA. Employees whose seniority dates are the same will have their seniority rank determined by lot.

**Section 2.** Preference to nursing vacancies including changes of shift times and new positions will be given to bargaining unit employees who meet the minimum

qualifications of the vacancy as per position posting. When qualifications and ability are equal, seniority prevails.

**Section 3.** Vacant positions will be posted to offer equal opportunity to all employees. Vacancies will be posted for a minimum of seven (7) calendar days. Within that seven (7) day period, the nurse must submit an electronic request as appropriate for the position. Management will notify each nurse not accepted for the position, in writing. Job vacancies will be posted in the areas currently used to post positions for other employees.

**Subsection 1.** If some specific requirements for the vacant position are necessary, they must be included in entirety in the job description, on the bid form, and advertised as such.

**Subsection 2.** A bargaining unit nurse who moves out of a bargaining unit position to take a non-bargaining unit position within the facility will retain their seniority although will not accrue any additional seniority for time spent out of the bargaining unit. If the nurse returns to the bargaining unit, seniority resumes.

**Section 4.** The Employer shall, upon written request, furnish the Association with a list of vacant RN positions and changes in RN FTE's including those filled by non-unit employees.

**Section 5.** Seniority will be forfeited by discharge or voluntary termination.

**Section 6.** To be absent from the job due to a layoff will be considered lost time for the purpose of seniority.

**Subsection 1.** Layoffs caused by reduction in working force will be in order of reverse seniority; that is, the employee last hired will be the first released. Employees scheduled to be released under such conditions will be given at least fourteen (14) calendar days' notice via certified mail or pay in lieu thereof.

**Subsection 2.** No permanent employee covered by this Agreement will be laid off while temporary or traveling employees are working. No temporary or traveling employee may displace a member of the bargaining unit; nor will temporary or traveling employees be used to defeat the right of bargaining unit employees as specifically provided for in this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 14. DISCIPLINE & DISCHARGE**

**Section 1.** Following completion of the probationary period provided in this Agreement, an employee shall not be disciplined or discharged except for just cause. An employee shall have the right to request a union representative during an investigatory meeting that the employee reasonably believes could lead to discipline. It is understood this right

shall not unduly delay the investigatory process. Paid release time may be granted to such a representative contingent upon staffing requirements of the Facility.

**Section 2.** In taking disciplinary action, the Employer shall follow the principle of progressive action directed towards the goal of correction; however, the parties acknowledge that there may be circumstances justifying immediate suspension or discharge. All discipline shall take place in a private area except when immediate correction is required due to resident safety or other urgent concerns. In these cases, follow-up shall occur in a private area.

**Section 3.** Progressive discipline shall be administered in accordance with M.O.M. Policy which incorporates the "informal actions" under ARM 2.21.6508 and "formal disciplinary actions" under ARM 2.21.6509.

**Subsection 1.** Informal actions include corrective counseling and oral warning. Formal actions include written warning, suspension, demotion, and discharge. It is understood that progressive discipline may also involve other corrective action. All incidents of progressive discipline shall be documented, and the information will be given to the employee. This may be done via e-mail, written missive or other documentable communication.

**Section 4.** Due process investigations shall be instituted as expeditiously as possible as circumstances would permit.

**Section 5.** Formal disciplinary action, as referenced in this Article, is subject to the grievance and arbitration article of this Agreement.

**Section 6.** Any termination for cause shall be stated in writing and given to the terminated nurse.

**Section 7.** Written warnings and informal discipline will, at the request of the Employee, be expunged from the Employee's file eighteen (18) months following issuance provided there have not been additional formal actions of the same nature issued during that year.

**Section 8.** Suspensions will, at the request of the employee, be expunged from the Employee's file two (2) years following issuance provided there has not been additional formal actions of the same nature issued in those years.

**Section 9.** A nurse may inspect their personnel file at any time in the presence of a management designee and in an area designated by management.

**Subsection 1.** All disciplinary documents and other documents of a performance related nature placed in a nurses' personnel file shall be first discussed with the nurse, the nurse will be offered the opportunity to initial the document prior to it being placed into the nurses file, although the initialization does not necessarily signify agreement. The nurse has the right to submit comments or a rebuttal, which will be affixed to the disciplinary, or performance related document.



## **ARTICLE 15. GRIEVANCE & ARBITRATION**

**Section 1.** Having a desire to create and maintain harmonious labor relations between them, the parties agree that they will promptly attempt to address all complaints, disputes, controversies, or other grievances arising between them involving questions of interpretation or application of the written provisions of this Agreement. At any step in the grievance process the Association or Management may request to meet in order to further discuss the grievance and possible resolution.

The grievant has the right to have an Association representative during all steps of the procedure. A grievance may be filed on behalf of the employee, a group of employees or the Association may file a grievance on behalf of the entire bargaining unit.

### **Informal Resolution**

All potential grievances must be discussed with the immediate supervisor prior to the filing of a formal grievance and no formal grievance may be filed until the immediate supervisor has been given an opportunity to attempt a resolution.

### **Section 2.** Grievance Procedure.

#### **Step 1**

A grievance involving the interpretation or application of the written provision(s) of this Agreement shall be submitted by the employee or Association representative to the employee's immediate supervisor or management designee within thirty (30) calendar days from the occurrence of the grievable event. The immediate supervisor, management designee, or Human Resources shall have fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

#### **Step 2**

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, the grievance may be advanced to Step 2 by the Association in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days from the immediate supervisor's or management designee's response to Step 1. The grievance should be advanced to the appropriate Facility Administrator or Human Resources. The Facility Administrator or designee at the second step shall have fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the advancement to respond in writing.

#### **Step 3**

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, the grievance may be advanced to Step 3 by the Association in writing within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the Step 2 response. The grievance should be advanced to the Director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services or designee. The agency head or designee shall have twenty-one (21) calendar days from receipt of the advancement to respond in writing.

**Step 4**

Should the Association consider the decision of the agency head unsatisfactory, the Association shall, within twenty-one (21) calendar days of such decision, notify the agency head and the State Office of Labor Relations of its intention to take the grievance to arbitration.

**Step 5**

After notification of arbitration, the Association and management may work with the State Office of Labor Relations (OLR) to determine if there is a mutually acceptable resolution that can be found or if the matter should go to mediation. This process shall take no longer than fourteen (14) calendar days. If the parties do not agree to resolve the grievance informally or mutually agree to mediation, the grievance shall proceed to final and binding arbitration. If there is a cost associated with mediation, arbitration or both, the parties will share costs equally. The timeline for the grievance processing will be put on hold until the mediation is final or the decision is made to move to arbitration.

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**Section 3.** Rules of Grievance Processing.

**Subsection 1.** Waiving time limits. Time limits at any stage of the grievance procedure may be extended by written mutual agreement of the parties at that step.

**Subsection 2.** Timeliness. A grievance not filed or advanced by the grievant or the Association within the time limits provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn. Failure on the part of the Employer's representative to answer within the time limit set forth in any step will entitle the grievance to be moved to the next step.

**Subsection 3.** Elements of the grievance. All presentations of grievances shall be submitted to the Employer in writing at each step and must include:

1. Name of employee(s)/Union grieving.
2. Date of the violation.
3. The step of the grievance process.
4. A statement of the grievance including the reason it is being filed.
5. The specific Article(s) and Section(s) of the Agreement violated.
6. The specific remedy or correction requested.
7. The signature of each grievant or representative.

**Subsection 4.** Alternative procedures.

1. As recognized in § 49-2-512, Title 49 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for acts constituting an alleged violation of the Montana Human Rights Act. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this Act, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Human Rights Bureau shall be the exclusive remedy.
2. As recognized in § 2-18-1011, Title 2 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for an alleged violation of classification. In the event of a job classification related grievance, the grievance shall be submitted according to the rules and regulations of the Board of Personnel Appeals. The Association reserves the right to file a grievance based on violation of the terms and conditions of this collective bargaining agreement.

#### **Section 4.** Rules of Arbitration.

**Subsection 1.** Selection of Arbitrator. The Association or Employer shall request a list of seven arbitrators from the Board of Personnel Appeals or Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) and shall alternatively strike names from the list. The last remaining name shall serve as the arbitrator.

**Subsection 2.** Arbitrator's limitations. No grievance which fails to meet the requirements of Section 3, Subsection 3 of this Article shall be determined to be arbitrable. The arbitrator may not add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of this Agreement.

**Subsection 4.** Each party shall share equally the cost of the arbitrator. In the event one of the parties wants transcripts from the proceedings of the arbitration, the party requesting the transcripts shall pay the entire cost. If each party requests a transcript, they shall equally share the cost.

**Subsection 5.** The arbitration location shall be in Helena, Montana unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties.

### **ARTICLE 16. LOW CENSUS**

**Section 1.** If the Employer needs to reduce staffing on a temporary basis due to fluctuation in resident census; volunteers will be sought first. Volunteers will receive low census shifts equitably and on a rotating basis. If there are none or insufficient volunteers, low census shift(s) shall be assigned in reverse order of seniority, that is, the least senior nurse on that shift shall be assigned the low census on a rotating basis. Subsequent low census shifts shall be assigned in rotation according to reverse seniority. Nurses on low census are entitled to use vacation, annual leave or leave without pay.

## **ARTICLE 17. SAVINGS CLAUSE**

**Section 1.** If any provision of this Agreement or the application of such provision shall, in any court or by other governmental action be held invalid, the remaining provisions and their application will not be affected.

## **ARTICLE 18. PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1.** The purpose of this committee shall be to facilitate communication and cooperation between professional RNs and management and establish a forum for open discussion of professional concerns, including but not limited to staffing levels, work schedules, training and education, public health policy and professional concerns: to identify problem areas; and to improve understanding of problems and needs of professional RNs and management. The committee is not intended to circumvent the chain-of-command.

**Section 2.** The committee shall consist of no more than three people selected by the Employer and three selected by the Association. Labor representatives for both the Association and the Employer may attend the meetings as non-members of the committee. The committee shall establish its own meeting schedule, not more often than monthly.

**Section 3.** Meetings of the committee may be held on the Employer's property and the committee may use such facilities. Three Association committee members shall be paid for up to one (1) hour of time for attending the committee meeting if regularly scheduled to work during the time that the meeting is held. It is understood said time will be granted if the representative is scheduled to work at the time of the meeting. Paid release time will not be considered time worked for purposes of calculating overtime, Management shall insure there is coverage of the Association representative's nursing duties during attendance of committee meetings. The parties agree that meetings shall be conducted expeditiously and efficiently though preparation and use of such things as agendas.

## **ARTICLE 19. TERM**

**Section 1.** The term of this Agreement will be from 0000 hours on the day following ratification through June 30, 2027. Either party shall notify the other in writing at least sixty (60) days and no more than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration date of its intention to terminate, amend or modify this Agreement. If the Association gives such notice, it agrees to notify the Chief Negotiator, Office of State Labor Relations in writing of such requested negotiations and at the same time to notify the director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

**Section 2.** It is agreed that the State and the Association will re-open negotiations on applicable economic issues sufficiently in advance of the Executive Budget submittal to ensure time for negotiations to take place. The Association shall have the right to strike after December 31, 2026 on wages, benefits and other economic issues for the 2027-2029 biennium.

**Section 3.** The parties recognize that this Agreement is a binding contract covering terms and conditions of employment and neither shall be obligated to bargain during its term except by mutual consent.

**THIS AGREEMENT** is signed and dated this 8/7/2025.

**THE STATE OF MONTANA:**

Signed by:

**Charles T. Brereton**

61408679875E473  
Charles T. Brereton, Director  
Public Health & Human Services

Signed by:



C9C428E5E1284ED  
Danielle Wichman, Administrator  
MMHNCC

Signed by:

*Karol Anne Davis*

38263999E2BE4DB  
Karol Anne Davis, Chief Negotiator  
State Office of Labor Relations

**THE ASSOCIATION:**

DocuSigned by:

*Amy Hauschild*

1A23282F1D6245E  
Amy Hauschild, Labor Representative  
Montana Nurses Association

Signed by:

*Bethany Eide*

C7AF35F15F20434  
Bethany Eide, President  
Local #14

Signed by:

*Lauren Buehler*

152D840646FE41B  
Lauren Buehler, Contract Negotiator  
Local #14

**PAY SCHEDULE A.**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PER</b>	<b>July 1, 2025</b>	<b>July 1, 2026</b>
Registered Nurse	HOUR	\$49.19	\$53.01

## **ADDENDUM A. CODE OF ETHICS FOR NURSES**

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

## ADDENDUM B. BROADBAND PAY PLAN PROVISIONS

This Agreement represents the parties' full and complete agreement for all provisions of the Broadband Pay Plan under the term of this contract.

**Section 1.** Economics. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2025, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2026, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater.

**Section 2.** State Of Montana Benefit Plan Contribution. The monthly Employer contribution for group benefits will increase to \$1080 for the 2026 plan year and \$1107 for the 2027 plan year.

The monthly State of Montana employee contributions will increase for 2026 and 2027 plan years. The tables below break out the monthly increase both before and after the wellness incentive which increased to \$60 per month for the 2026 and 2027 plan years.

The cost of employee-only coverage will be covered by the Employer contribution, after the wellness incentive is applied.

Employee Monthly Contributions Before Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contribution	2027 Plan Year Contribution
Employee Only	\$60	\$60
Employee and Spouse	\$318	\$326
Employee and Children	\$134	\$138
Employee and Family	\$397	\$407

Employee Monthly Contributions After Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contributions	2027 Plan Year Contributions
Employee Only	\$0	\$0
Employee and Spouse	\$198	\$206
Employee and Children	\$74	\$78
Employee and Family	\$277	\$287

The monthly Tobacco Surcharge will increase to \$60 for the 2026 and 2027 plan year.

The State has the discretion to manage all aspects of the State Health Plan, to include, but not be limited to, deductibles, coinsurance levels, and maximum out-of-pocket



levels. Member contributions will only increase beyond the rates established above if the Risk-Based Capital (RBC) level is at or below 300%.

**Section 3.** Longevity. All calculations are base rates and not inclusive of longevity.

**Section 4.** Hiring rates. Employees new to state government will typically be hired at the entry for the occupation. In determining a new employee's hiring rate above entry, the Supervisor, or designee, shall consider criteria such as: the employee's job-related qualifications and competencies; existing salary relationships within the job class, band and work unit; department affordability; and the competitive labor market.

**Section 5.** Training Assignments. The Supervisor or designee may establish written training assignments to enable an employee to gain the additional experience and training required for the job for a period of time not to exceed two years. At the completion of the training assignment, the employee's pay will be set no less than the entry rate of pay for the occupational pay band.

**Section 6.** Market-based pay. Pay awarded to employees based on comparisons to how other employers compensate employees in similar jobs. Market-based comparisons consider not only base pay, but also other types of compensation and benefits having a definable dollar value. The Department may consider market-based pay adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 7.** Competency-based pay. Pay based on an assessment of an employee's job-related competence. The Department may consider competency-based pay adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 8.** Results-based pay. Pay awarded to employees or employee teams based on accomplishments. Results-based pay may be awarded for specific outcomes or outputs. The Department may consider results-based pay adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 9.** Strategic pay. Pay awarded to attract and retain key employees with competencies critical or vital to achievement of the Department's mission or strategic goals. The Department may consider strategic pay on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 10.** Situational pay. Pay based on circumstances that occur that are not encountered in either the majority of jobs in state government or jobs used to make market comparisons. It is intended to address difficulties in recruitment and retention. It may be considered when atypical requirements exist in a position, for example, unusual hours, extreme physical demands, or environmental hazards that are causing recruitment and retention problems. The Department may consider situational-based pay on a case-by-case basis.