

UNION

Collective Bargaining Fact Sheet

A collective bargaining session is about to begin. You will represent the Solidarity Workers Union, which includes 750 workers at Get-well Public Hospital, a publicly-owned hospital run by the government for the people in the city of Shanghai. The bargaining unit includes nurses, laboratory technicians (lab techs), radiology technicians (X-ray techs), pharmacy technicians, food service, and maintenance/housekeeping workers. The issues in your negotiations are:

2. Medical Benefits
3. Health and Safety
4. Seniority

Your goal is to negotiate the best collective bargaining agreement you can for **a one-year contract** for all of your workers. Any contract you agree to must be approved by the union membership through a vote.

Here's some background:

1. **Wages:** This is an extremely important bargaining issue to your union membership. The average wage of a bargaining unit member is 1000 RMB per month, and many employees are having a hard time paying bills (rent, food, etc.). You feel that the wages are not keeping up with consumer price inflation. You want the new contract to make up for this. You also believe that the workers deserve a greater share of the hospital's budget because it is your workers' labor that creates the hospital's excellent services and reputation. Your initial demand is a 10 percent wage increase, or about 100 RMB per month. (Formula for cost: Each wage increase of 1% for 750 employees x 1000 RMB x 12 months = approximately 100,000 RMB cost to the hospital.)
2. **Medical Benefits:** Get-well Hospital has provided health care services at no charge for all employees and their families on-site at the Hospital, or any other public hospital around the nation. To do so, Get-well Hospital provides the union with an additional 2% of the total wages, (approximately 200,000 RMB) and the union uses this money to pay for the health care services needed by the workers and their families. Recently, Get-well management informed the union that the cost of providing these health care services is increasing. To maintain their current medical benefits, the workers want the hospital to increase the money provided to the union for their health care insurance to 2.5% of the total wages (or approximately 300,000 RMB). You believe that management can afford to pay for any health care cost increases with a small portion of the hospital's growing budget from the government.

3. **Health and Safety:** Accidental “sharps” injuries from needles, surgical tools, and test tubes are a serious hazard for all hospital workers, from housekeepers to direct caregivers, both during and after use. There are more than 25 blood-borne diseases that workers can contract from exposure to sharp objects that contain body fluids or blood, including HIV and hepatitis. Recently, a housekeeper was “stuck” while closing the lid of a “sharps” trash container that was full. In addition, the members are also concerned about the number of back injuries and repetitive motion stress injuries. The union wants management to:
- Set up a labor-management Health and Safety Committee to establish injury prevention programs, with half of the committee members selected by the union.
 - Commit 10,000 RMB to pay for annual health and safety training for all workers during work hours.
4. **Seniority:** The union wants management to fill job openings on day shift and night shift with the most senior (most years of employment) of the qualified employees who apply. (Job openings are created by the hospital’s expansion, or by workers who retire, quit, get fired, or go on a leave of absence.) To fill job openings, management should first announce openings to all the workers on the hospital bulletin boards, and any qualified worker can submit an application. Then, management should give the job to the most qualified worker with the highest seniority (length of employment), before hiring new workers. The workers feel that the supervisors give job openings to their “favorites” (especially on the more desirable day shift), and often ignore qualified workers with more years at the hospital.

