

Dear CRONA Nurses,

The end of year is a time to take stock and plan for the future. Your CRONA contract provides a variety of negotiated benefits and now is a good time to **make sure you are getting the most from your benefits.**

In Unity,

Colleen Borges, President  
CRONA

## Saving for Retirement

Are you making the most of your 403(b) retirement matching? Don't leave money on the table! Every CRONA Nurse in a Regular position may participate in the matching retirement contribution after the first twelve months of continuous employment. You automatically receive an Employer contribution of 5% of your annual pension eligible earnings. You also receive a match of your own contributions, based on years of retirement eligible service:

- 1 – 4 years: 4% match
- Between 5 – 10 years: 5% match
- 10 or more years: 7% match

Remember, we negotiated a 1% increase to matching contributions effective the pay period starting 12/26/2021. This will increase the matching to 5% - 6% - 8%. Your CRONA Negotiations Team fought hard to negotiate that contract language so you can save even more for retirement; make sure you are on track to take advantage of it.

Log on to Fidelity to change your contribution: <https://nb.fidelity.com/public/nb/default/home>

### *How To Increase Retirement Savings Without Decreasing Take-Home Pay*

If your finances are challenging and it seems too difficult to increase your contribution for the maximum match, try doing it incrementally. When we get our annual contract raise in April is a great time to increase your retirement contribution without seeing a smaller paycheck – set a calendar reminder now to increase your contribution in conjunction with the 3% raise in April. If you are seeking to increase your Clinical Nurse level via the PNDP and get a pay bump to Clinical Nurse 3 or 4, put some of the increase towards your retirement contributions.

## Certification Pay

*First Contract Year One-Time \$2000, Then \$1500/Year*

Get recognized for your expertise in a way that really matters – your paycheck. If you obtain and maintain a certification “that is either the most applicable certification in the Nurse’s area of specialty or a certification that supports the basic clinical practice in the Nurse’s area of work”, you will be paid a one-time incentive of \$2000, followed by quarterly payments of \$375 (\$1500 annually). If you already submitted your certification and receive \$2000 last year, great! As long as you maintain current proof of certification in HealthStream you will start receiving \$375 quarterly starting in May 2020.

If you have not received the \$2000, you have until March 31, 2020 to upload proof of current certification to receive the \$2000 in May 2020; you will then receive \$375 per quarter starting the next quarter and on an ongoing basis as long as you continue to maintain certification and have a current valid certification uploaded to HealthStream. Don't know how to upload your certification? Read this tutorial: <http://crona.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Job-Aid-How-to-add-a-Certification-in-Your-HealthStream-Profile-v4.pdf>

## Do You Have An Emergency/Strike Fund?

Your CRONA Negotiation Team negotiated a 1% longevity bonus, to be paid in May 2020. Consider using that money to jump-start your savings.

### *Give Yourself Peace of Mind, Get Started Now*

It is common financial advice to have an emergency fund with three to six months of expenses. We negotiate a new contract every three years, and with every contract negotiation there is the possibility that a strike will be necessary. CRONA Nurses have not gone on strike since 2000, but we have come very close, most recently just this year.

Are you ready? The strength of CRONA is our unity and our commitment to our patients and to each other. The best thing you can do now to be prepared is to build your strength by having enough money set aside so that potentially going on strike is not a financial hardship.

In the words of one CRONA Nurse, *"As soon as I was hired and understood that I might have to someday go on strike to protect the benefits, pay, and working conditions our contract provides, I knew I wanted to be financially ready. Most of the time, I call that savings my 'Emergency Fund', but when it's time for negotiations I call it my 'Strike Fund' and I know I'm ready to go."*

Start saving now so you'll always be prepared for an emergency. When you get your next certification pay, next annual raise, or a larger paycheck from working extra, consider adding some of that money to your emergency savings.

## Education Benefit – Plan Now

All SHC and LPCH Regular Nurses, SHC and LPCH Relief C, SHC Relief D, LPCH Relief B, and LPCH Relief A Nurses who have completed their trial period are eligible for Educational Assistance. See Section 13 of the LPCH contract and Section 14 of the SHC for more detailed information.

- SHC/LPCH Regular Nurse: up to 40 hours paid Education time and \$2000 reimbursement, prorated based on your FTE commitment. *For example*, a 0.9 FTE Regular Nurse may use 36 Education hours and receive \$1800 reimbursement.
- SHC Relief C and D Nurse: prorated Education hours and reimbursement based on commitment. *For example*, a 0.5 FTE Relief C may use 20 Education hours and receive \$1000 reimbursement
- LPCH Relief C Nurse: 16 Education hours
- LPCH Relief B: 8 Education hours
- LPCH Relief A: 8 Education hours

If your Education day is less than the length of your usual shift, you may use PTO or Absent time (ATO hours or unpaid Absent time) for the remaining hours of your shift.

## Required Education Classes

*Paid From Hospital Training Budget, NOT Your Education Hours/Funds*

If you are *required* to take an education course, you do *not* use your Education hours or funds, or your own money, to pay for the class. Your class is paid for by the hospital and you are paid for your time. Some newer managers recently told nurses that a mandatory class had to be paid from their Education hours. This is incorrect and *you should notify CRONA immediately if this happens.*

**\*\* Exception:** if you take a required ACLS/BLS/PALS outside the hospital, you are still paid the *hours* from the hospital, but must use your Education *funds* to pay for the class.

## Education Days May Be Pre-Approved Up To One Year In Advance

Remember, you may request pre-approved Education days up to a year in advance. CRONA Nurses were vocal during the 2019 Negotiations when the hospitals wanted to end protections for the Pre-Approved Vacation and Education Days policy. Because of the vocal support of CRONA Nurses, your Negotiation Team was able to again secure protection of this policy in our contract. If you believe you have been unreasonably denied pre-approved Education time within your commitment, please let CRONA leadership know by sending a message to [crona@crona.org](mailto:crona@crona.org).

## Holiday Bundling:

### *Requests For 2020 Voting Open January 1st*

Did your unit vote for holiday bundling, or did you wish it had? You may request a holiday bundling vote for 2020 as soon as January 1<sup>st</sup>. Each unit may have one vote that must be held before September 1<sup>st</sup>, but the vote may be held any time before that. If holiday bundling worked well for your unit, consider if you'd like to have your 2020 vote early in the year. See the contract, SHC Section 20.1.1, LPCH Section 19.3.1 for more details. The form to request the holiday bundling vote is on the [Forms page](#) of the CRONA website, <http://crona.org/resources/forms/>

## ADO: Assignment Despite Objection

### *Asking For Help In Real Time, Help Identify System Issues*

Submitting an ADO when there is an issue should be part of the nursing culture at Stanford and Packard hospitals. They are intended to document a nurse's request for help or identifying issues in real time, and to bring high-level attention to system issues. All ADOs are reviewed by CRONA and Nursing leadership, and unit managers are required to seek solutions and discuss the situation with the Nurse Practice committee.

When there is a situation that calls for an ADO, first try to get help *in real time* by following the chain of command: Resource Nurse, Manager on Duty, Nursing Supervisor. To escalate further, contact the Director on Duty. Provide the information about the situation and specify what is needed to resolve the situation. Here is one example: "*Situation:* the unit is short four nurses on night shift. *Objective:* Staffing does not have anyone to send, and we have not found anyone willing to come in for ECB. The Crisis Nurse can help briefly but it will not be enough to meet our needs. *Assessment:* we will not be able to safely care for our patients or take our breaks without violating Title 22. *Plan,* we need you to come in and work and/or we need your help to find enough nurses to meet our staffing needs."

### *Here are some of the issues for which submitting an ADO is appropriate:*

- Violation of staffing ratios, *including during rest and meal breaks*
- Not trained or experienced in the area assigned (including equipment such as ECMO or CRRT)
- Inadequate staff for patient acuity (acuity may require more staff than minimum ratios)
- Equipment and/or supplies were inadequate for patient care
- Patients admitted or transferred without adequate or qualified staff
- Involuntarily required to work beyond scheduled shift
- Unit staffed with excessive travelers or unqualified personnel
- Other (please describe)

Need the ADO form? It is on the CRONA website, click [HERE for ADO form](http://crona.org/resources/forms/). <http://crona.org/resources/forms/>