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Workers Ratify Contract at Auburn Community Hospital

New Agreement Ends 9-Month Labor Dispute

AFSCME Local 3124 health care workers at ACH overwhelmingly voted to ratify a new union contract after almost a year of difficult negotiations. In a major win for workers, the new agreement creates contractual language for the health insurance plan, ensuring that management cannot take away coverage or increase out-of-pocket expenses without first negotiating the impact with the Union. The new contract provides annual wage increases. Union negotiators also won a new weekend pay differential.

"Since negotiations began last fall, it's been our priority to protect our health coverage by including it in our collective bargaining agreement. This will require ACH to negotiate the impact of any future changes to its employees' health plan with us," explained **Maureen Coleman**, President of AFSCME Local 3124 and respiratory therapist at ACH. When the Union's last contract expired in January, management unilaterally increased the deductible for the health care plan from \$1,500 to \$1,700 (\$3,000 to \$3,400 for family plans).

As negotiations continued, workers held two well-attended [informational pickets](#) to rally the community for a fair contract. Allied workers from the Cayuga County Labor Council (AFL-CIO) and elected officials from the City of Auburn and Cayuga County provided crucial support throughout this fight.

"We're incredibly grateful for everyone who stood by us," **Coleman** said. "This hospital and the people who work here are important assets to this community. While this agreement is a big step forward, we'll continue to use our collective voice to raise concerns because patients and residents deserve the very best level of care."

The new contract will benefit over 300 union employees – including certified nurses assistants, personal care aides, food service workers, cleaners, and mechanics – at Auburn Community Hospital and the Finger Lakes Center for Living.

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