

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:  
June 9, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Labor Relations

Subject: Approve Addendum No. 5 To The 2006-11 Health Services Unit Labor Agreement To Provide One Seniority List For All Classes Of Medical Assistant And Medical Assistant Language And Culture In The Department Of Health And Human Services

Contact: Steve Keil, Assistant to the County Executive For Labor Policy and Negotiations  
874-7095

**Overview**

This report recommends that the Board approve Addendum No. 5 to the Health Services Unit Agreement which will allow all regular employees in the regular Medical Assistant class and in the separate Medical Assistant Language and Culture classes to be on one seniority list instead of separate lists by class for the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Recommendation**

Approve attached Addendum No. 5 to the 2006-11 Health Services Unit Labor Agreement between the County of Sacramento and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 146 to establish one seniority list for all of the various Medical Assistant classes.

**Measures/Evaluation**

Measure and Evaluations are not applicable.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact.

**DISCUSSION**

Medical Assistant employees in the County are either in the regular class of Medical Assistant or in one of the special skills classes, such as Medical Assistant, Russian Language and Culture. By contract, those employees with special skills receive a differential for their language skills. There are seven (7) special skills classes covering the various needed languages and cultures. The regular Medical Assistant class and each special skills class are considered a separate class resulting in eight (8) different classes for Medical Assistants. The reason for having separate

classes for the special skills is to allow the Department to determine the language needs of the operation/program and ensure employees are hired based upon those needs. Also, in a reduction in force situation layoffs occur by class and seniority lists are established for each separate class. So in case of a layoff the Department can determine the operational needs of the programs and ensure language needs are covered by selecting which classes will be affected by layoffs. For example, if there is a need for Russian language skills in a particular program, the layoffs could occur in a mix of the Medical Assistant classes while ensuring a position in the needed Russian Special Skills class is retained.

The Department of Health and Human Services has employees in the regular Medical Assistant class as well as some employees in the special skills classes. Unfortunately, layoffs are necessary in the Medical Assistant classes and were approved as part of the mid-year reductions. As the seniority lists were prepared it came to the attention of the Department and the Union that there are employees in positions in the regular Medical Assistant class who receive a special skills differential and who should have been placed in the appropriate special skills class. The Department had hired these individuals into the regular Medical Assistant class and simply paid the differential in order to use their language skills. The dilemma created by having employees in a special skills class and also employees with that same special skill in the regular class is that separate layoff lists are established by class; so a more senior employee in one class may be scheduled for layoff even though a less senior employee with that same special skill is not scheduled for layoff depending upon which class is selected for layoff. For example, in the current layoff situation the Department has three regular Medical Assistant positions scheduled for layoff and one Russian Special Skills position. The employee who is scheduled to be laid off in the Russian Special Skills class has more seniority than employees in the regular Medical Assistant class with the special skills who will not be affected by the layoffs. This creates an unfair situation for the more senior employee in the Russian Special Skills class.

To correct this problem, the attached addendum will allow the County to combine all of the employees in the various Medical Assistant classes onto one seniority list. This will alleviate the situation described above where an employee in a special skills class with more seniority will be laid off instead of a less senior employee with that same special skill. Due to the large number of employees in the regular Medical Assistant class with special skills the Department will still retain the mix of language skills necessary for the operations. To our knowledge, the Medical Assistant classes in the Department of Health and Human Services are the only classes with this problem of mixing employees with the same special skills between the regular class and special skills classes.

We recommend approval of this addendum to resolve the seniority issues for the upcoming layoff of Medical Assistants and Medical Assistant Language and Culture classes.

### **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

There is no fiscal impact for this addendum.

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Respectfully submitted,

APPROVAL RECOMMENDED:

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STEVE KEIL  
Assistant to the County Executive for  
Labor Policy and Negotiations

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TERRY SCHUTTEN  
County Executive

Attachment: Addendum No. 5

cc: Countywide Services Agency Administrator  
Director of Health and Human Services  
Director of Personnel Services  
Personnel Actions Manager  
AFSCME, Local 146