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A REPORT FROM UNITE HERE LOCAL 1

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We Deserve Better

The Fight for Healthcare at HMSHost O’Hare Airport

“ I DON’T HAVE ANY HEALTHCARE, I CAN’T AFFORD IT.

I’m supposed to be on blood pressure medication, but I can’t afford it because I don’t have any health insurance — it costs too much money.

I’m 42, but I feel older than 42 because the job is hard, it’s fast paced, we’re on our feet for 7-8 hours a day, every day. Living in Chicago is hard. I’ve been here my entire life. South side, there’s crime, there’s shootings. A lot of us need therapy, we can’t afford therapy.

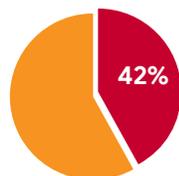
It all takes its toll on your body, mentally and physically. You need health insurance, you need it really badly, to get through life, but I can’t afford it. I can’t afford the health insurance, can’t afford to go to the doctor, can’t afford to go to Cook County [Hospital], can’t afford to take care of my health.

But, I believe in my coworkers. I will go on strike if we need to because we deserve better. ”



— ANTOINETTE BARBER,
Cook at HMSHost O’Hare,
Stanley’s Blackhawks
Kitchen & Tap, 11 years

Ms. Barber is not alone. UNITE HERE surveyed 375 people who work at HMSHost, O’Hare Airport about their healthcare. **One in four HMSHost workers surveyed said that in the past year, a family member had not received doctor’s care, prescription medications, or other medical treatment because the family needed the money to buy food, clothing, or pay for housing.** Other responses to the survey further illustrate the state of healthcare for these HMSHost workers and their families.



Of those surveyed, 42% of workers not enrolled in HMSHost-offered insurance plans say they do not enroll because they cannot afford it

1 in 3 HMSHost workers surveyed report that they, their spouse, or a child rely on a government program for healthcare coverage



More than 1,200 people who serve Chicago visitors and residents as baristas, cooks, servers, bartenders, and bussers at O’Hare Airport are employed by HMSHost International.

“IT’S TIME TO COME TOGETHER and stand up for our health and our families.

I pay ridiculous amounts of money for the current health insurance through HMSHost, but I need coverage to take care of my health conditions. It means I have to sacrifice to get the healthcare I need, and I catch myself wondering: how am I paying my bills? How am I getting food for my kids?



I refuse to sacrifice like that anymore. ”

—TAMEKAH SHIVERS,
Starbucks Barista at HMSHost, 11 years

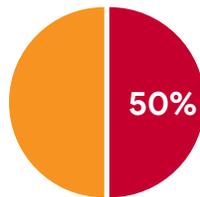
The Painful Cost of Health

According to wage scales provided by HMSHost, **67% of non-tipped HMS workers make less than the Airport Minimum Wage of \$13.45 per hour.** The Airport Minimum Wage does not currently apply to HMSHost at O’Hare Airport; the Mayor’s Executive Order applies to City of Chicago contracts advertised on or after October 1, 2014.¹

The financial burden of healthcare for HMSHost baristas, cooks, servers, bartenders, and bussers affects Chicago’s families:² **One in four HMSHost workers surveyed said that in the past year, a family member had not received doctor’s care, prescription medications, or other medical treatment because the family needed the money to buy food, clothing, or pay for housing.**

A quarter of HMSHost employees surveyed said they have medical debt. **Half of these HMSHost workers think it will take them more than two years to pay off their debt, or that they do not**

know how long paying it off will take. On average, surveyed HMSHost workers estimated they have \$2,863 in medical debt.

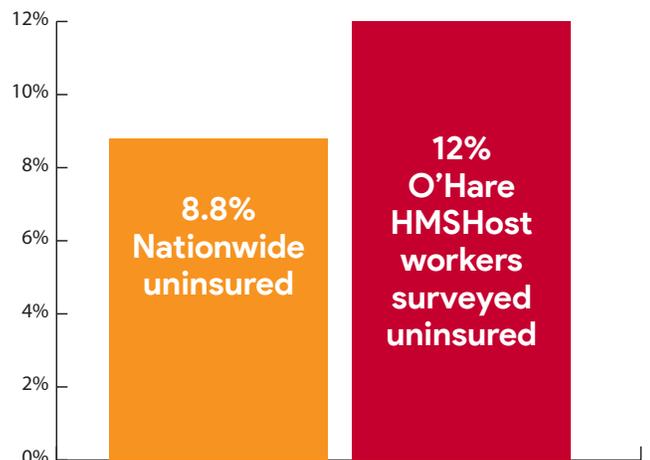


Half of these HMSHost workers think it will take them more than two years to pay off their debt, or that they do not know how long paying it off will take.

Uninsured & Without Care

Nationwide, the uninsured rate was 8.8% in 2016.³ But at O’Hare Airport, **12% of HMSHost workers surveyed reported being uninsured;** of these, 57% identify as African American or Latino.

Of those surveyed, **42% of workers not enrolled in HMSHost-offered insurance plans say they do not enroll because they cannot afford it.**



When asked for comments on their healthcare, HMSHost workers said things like **“the cost is too high for me, I’m a single mom with three kids,”** and **“I can’t afford to go to the doctor,”** and shared stories about not being able to access healthcare necessities such as blood pressure medication and pain management care because of cost.

Reliance on Taxpayer-Funded Healthcare



One in three HMSHost workers surveyed report that they, their spouse, or a child rely on a government program for healthcare coverage — including but not limited to CountyCare, All Kids, and Moms & Babies.

Of the HMSHost workers who reported having no insurance for someone in their family, **18% said they rely on Cook County Hospital for medical care.**

Endnotes

- 1 Executive Order No. 2014-01. Current rate set on July 1, 2017 by “2017 Notice Regarding Executive Order 2014-1” published by the City Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection.
- 2 242 survey respondents listed Chicago address.
- 3 Barnett, Jessica and Edward Berchick. “Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2016, Current Population Reports.” *United States Census Bureau*. Issued September 2017. www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-260.pdf

“NO ONE WORKING A FULL TIME JOB SHOULD HAVE TO WORRY THIS MUCH *about how they’re going to afford necessary health care, it’s not right and my coworkers and I are ready to change it.*”



— MARIA INIGUEZ VILLALOBOS,
Server at HMSHost,
Wicker Park Sushi Bar, 29 years

“I HAVE TO BE ON BOTH THE INSURANCE FROM HMSHOST AND COUNTYCARE *because when I just had the company insurance, every time I went to the doctor it was another big bill I couldn’t afford. But now, between the two, I’m covered.*



I hate that I have to supplement the insurance I pay good money for through HMSHost with a medical card that’s paid for by other taxpayers like me—it’s not right and I’m ready to do what it takes to win good healthcare.”

—AQUEPHINA SHELTON,
Cook at HMSHost, Wolfgang Puck, 5 years



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