

SEIU wins pact for 25,000 home care workers

The Service Employees International Union Local 1199 is expected to say today it has successfully negotiated a contract for 25,000 Massachusetts home care workers, a year after the powerful local organized the workers.

The vote, to be disclosed this morning at an event in Brighton with Mayor Thomas M. Menino, would increase workers' wages from \$10.84 to \$12.48 an hour over three years, and provide healthcare benefits in the second year of the contract. SEIU said last year's organizing victory was the largest union election ever in New England.

The union is still involved in an intense organizing effort aimed at unionizing lower-level employees at many of the city's academic medical

centers.

In recent months, SEIU has used billboards and advertisements to criticize Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

The union said the voting results expected to be made official today "will add even further resources and strength to the growing movement of nonunion workers in Boston area hospitals who are organizing to join 1199." SEIU is also believed to be close to completing a contract with Caritas Christi Health Care, the six-hospital chain owned by the Archdiocese of Boston.

Most home care workers are hired individually by patients or their families, but are paid by MassHealth, the state's Medicaid program.

JEFFREY KRASNER

