

NUHW KECK–USC STRIKE

Questions and Answers

THE BASICS

Why are we going on strike?

NUHW members at Keck Hospital of USC overwhelmingly authorized a strike to stand up for quality care for our patients, improved working conditions, increased staffing levels, and improvements to our benefits and retirement plan.

Does Keck’s Declaration of Impasse and Implementation of its “Last, Best and Final” offer affect our right to strike?

No. We retain our legal right to strike under the National Labor Relations Act. (Note: We are challenging the legality of Keck’s Declaration of Impasse.)

Can the Keck make unilateral changes after declaring impasse?

No. Keck–USC can only implement what is in their final offer; they can make no other changes without bargaining with us. The only changes imposed by Keck that we did not agree to in our negotiations are education, tuition and wages. All other changes, including health and welfare, were tentatively agreed to by the Union. In addition, the side letters are part of the status quo including the prohibition against subcontracting.

When and where is the strike?

The proposed strike is for a period of 24 hours, with picket lines in place from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The day of the strike has not yet been determined. Members are legally covered for the 24-hour duration and are not required to report to work. For more specific information or detail, contact an NUHW organizer.

Why is it important that I participate in the strike?

We have been negotiating for 8 months. Our ability to stop Keck’s unfair labor practices, secure appropriate staffing, and win a fair contract will come from strong strike participation by all members. Participation means signing up your co-workers and joining the picket line. Solid participation will send the message to the media and the public that we are united and committed to win. Crossing the picket line tells Keck that their unfair labor practices, short staffing practices, and cuts are acceptable.

OUR RIGHTS

Do we have the right to strike and picket?

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and California state law both protect our right to peacefully picket.

Can I be fired or disciplined for striking?

No. Employees have the right to engage in concerted, protected activities (like strikes and pickets) under the National Labor Relations Act. A strike is a protected activity.

Q: Can we be “locked out” for striking?

A: We are striking in protest of Keck’s unfair labor practices and it is illegal for the employer to lock out workers who are engaged in an Unfair Labor Practice strike.

I’m still in my probationary period (or per diem). Can I strike too?

Yes. You have the same rights and protections under federal law as any other employee.

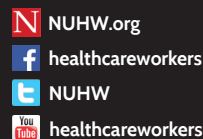
I’m an intern or postdoc and not a member of NUHW, but I don’t cross picket lines. Can I honor the strike?

Federal law, upheld by the United States Supreme Court, gives all employees the right, as a matter of conscience, to honor a picket line.

Do I have the right to distribute information to patients and members of the public on Keck property?

Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act states, “Employees shall have the right to self-organization to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.”

Distributing information to patients or members of the public is protected concerted activity. You must make sure not to interfere with patient care or conduct these activities in patient care areas and do it on non-work time.



PATIENTS AND SCHEDULING

How can we ensure our patients are cared for?

We will give management more than 10 days notice of the strike. Management will have ample time to plan ahead by rescheduling or rerouting patients, preparing managers to cover shifts, etc.

Do I have to personally notify my manager that I won't be coming to work on the day of the strike?

No. Our legal 10-day notice document informs Keck that all NUHW members will not be reporting to work. There is no need to call in.

What if my manager asks me, "for scheduling purposes," if I'm coming to work?

You do not have to answer, although the best answer is, "No, I am standing with my co-workers." It is unlawful for your manager to ask you further questions about your plans or to try to discourage you from participating. If they do so, please notify your steward.

Can I take PTO, ATO, or Ed Leave on the day of the strike?

No. Your day on strike is a day without pay. If you already have vacation scheduled and approved, you can — and should — still join us on the picket line.

I am on call during the day of the strike.

If you work or are on call on the strike day starting before the 6 a.m. strike time, report to work or call as usual. At the time the strike begins at 6 a.m., report off to a manager, and then join your co-workers on the picket line. If you are on call the morning that the strike ends, then you should complete the balance of your call shift after 6 a.m.

PICKETING AND OTHER STRIKE DETAILS

Can I bring friends, family, children, or pets?

Children, family, and friends are welcome, as are well-behaved pets, but be aware that the loud chanting may be frightening to some pets.

What should I wear?

We'll be outside and doing a lot of walking, so wear comfortable clothes and shoes. NUHW's color is red, so wearing something red is appreciated. Red NUHW ponchos will be provided if it rains.

Should I bring anything?

Food and water will be provided, as well as porta-potties and picket signs. Bring sunscreen.

How should I interact with members of the public, patients, and others while on the picket line?

Media should be directed to the designated spokesperson for the picket line, the picket captain, or an NUHW staffer. Contacts with media, the public, managers, security, and workers crossing the picket line should be respectful, informative, and courteous. Inquiries or special circumstances/incidents should be directed to or reported to the picket captains.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Staying home on strike day is not the same as striking!
- Please do not assume that your colleagues will walk the picket line for you. We need a show of force every day, as much as possible.
- Do not feel guilty about striking!
- You are standing up for your patients, your community, and your co-workers. Keck management is the party responsible for placing us in the position where we have to protect our patients, our values, our benefits, and our co-workers.
- Do not be swayed by the argument, "You are lucky to have a job in this economy."
- Keck is successful because of the dedicated care provided every day by its workers. Keck is lucky to have caring, committed, hard-working Therapists, LVNs, CNAs, EVS workers, Kitchen workers, Monitor Techs, Lab Personal, and other front-line hospital workers and caregivers working for them!