



NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Kindred Hospital Bay Area

Kindred Hospital Brea • Kindred Hospital Westminster

FEBRUARY 2017

NUHW keeps growing with big win in Oakland

About 250 Children's pharmacists, social workers, physical therapists and other professional workers at **UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland** voted by a 4-1 margin January 24 to join NUHW.

More than half of the new members work in mental health, an area of expertise for the union which represents several thousand mental health professionals at Kaiser hospitals and clinics.

These new members are coming on board as the union negotiates a new contract for its approximately 900 technical, business/office clerical, and service workers at Children's.

With more than 1,100 members now at the facility, the union is better positioned to boost pay, improve working conditions, and beat back UCSF's threats to cut service to the East Bay.

"We want to make this organization even better and safeguard care for the families we serve," said Felicia Hashimoto, an occupational therapist. "We can do this by having a bigger say in the hospital so we can better advocate for ourselves and our patients."

This election victory comes on the heels of several organizing victories last year including 419 caregivers at Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa, 120 at the University of Southern California's Norris Cancer Hospital, and more than 600 at Children's Hospital Oakland. More than 2,000 workers have joined NUHW in the past 12 months.

KINDRED BREA MEMBERS ENFORCE SICK LEAVE LAW

Kindred Brea members won a grievance to stop the unlawful discipline of a member for using her accrued sick time. By citing California's new paid sick leave law, we reduced her written warning to verbal counseling. We also compelled the employer to start including workers' PTO balances on their paycheck stubs and post state-mandated posters informing employees of their rights under the law.

Signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in September 2014, the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act (AB 1522) became effective on July 1, 2015. The law extends paid sick leave eligibility to more than 6.5 million employees who previously had no paid sick days – roughly 40 percent of the state's workforce. The law covers temporary, part-time, and seasonal employees.

The provision of the law about accruing sick days does not impact our members since our contract already includes paid sick leave. However, the law includes other provisions that protect our members in using their sick leave, such as prohibiting employers from retaliating or discriminating against employees for using sick days. AB 1522 also requires changes to the employer's new-hire employee notice, posting a new workplace poster, and recordkeeping obligations.

If you have any questions about your sick leave, contact your steward or union organizer.

MANAGEMENT AGREES TO OUR STAFFING SOLUTIONS

At our last monthly labor-management meeting at Kindred Brea, we raised concerns about low staffing and its impact on patient care. Management agreed to adopt some of our suggestions, including creating a turn and lift team, developing a better response system to call lights, and allocating time before each shift for an informal huddle to discuss workload.

We expressed to management that we had not been regularly staffed according to state-mandated nurse-to-patient ratios. In some cases, nurses have had to care for and monitor 16 patients at a time. To remedy these staffing shortages, we are now working with management to develop a turning and lifting team that would turn and lift patients more systematically by using existing nursing staff, as well as physical therapists and respiratory therapists.

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BARGAINING UNDERWAY AT KINDRED BAY AREA

Our new bargaining committees, one representing registered nurses and the other representing service and technical workers, have been bargaining since September. Bargaining so far has focused mostly on non-economic proposals. Last month we received an economic proposal from management – one percent every six months for a three-year contract. This is not good enough by a long shot. We are highly insulted that the employer has made no effort to account for the cost of living in the Bay Area and how far behind we are compared to other hospitals. Management would rather deal with the expense of hiring and training new employees than to retain highly qualified skilled employees by paying us decent wages. Our strength comes from the membership's active involvement in achieving a fair contract. We will continue to organize internally and to fight back against management's inferior proposal.

Members gather for statewide meetings

With the executive orders signed in his tumultuous first week on the job, President Donald Trump has upended the lives of millions of immigrants and their families and cast uncertainty over our nation's healthcare system. The new government taking shape in Washington D.C. will have major implications for us as caregivers and union members. In addition to radical changes to healthcare, we can expect President Trump to appoint a National Labor Relations Board that is friendlier to management than it is to us.

As a union that prizes democracy, NUHW scheduled special membership meetings across the state from January into early February to hear members' thoughts on how we should respond to the new federal government and stand up for each other and our patients. In the ten total meetings we've held — from Humboldt to San Diego — we had robust discussions about immigration, universal healthcare, the threat to our rights as a union, and much more.

We also discussed two resolutions. The first, which has been adopted by our union's elected board, reaffirms our support for a Medicare for All universal healthcare system and efforts underway to make that a reality in California. The second, which would declare that we are a "Sanctuary Union" committed to defending the rights of immigrants, has been recommended by the board for discussion at our meetings.

If you would like a copy of the resolutions, contact your steward or NUHW organizer.

PROVIDENCE TARZANA NUHW MEMBERS PICKET AGAINST LAYOFFS OF SEIU-REPRESENTED HOUSEKEEPERS

More than 75 Providence Tarzana Medical Center workers picketed the hospital January 16 demanding that management bring back more than two dozen SEIU-represented housekeepers. The hospital finally brought these long outsourced jobs in-house, but refused to bring aboard at least 25 of its 57 housekeepers, claiming they are somehow no longer qualified to do their jobs. Some worked for the hospital for more than a decade. With SEIU missing in action, NUHW members at Providence Tarzana have taken up the fight on behalf of their co-workers. The Catholic hospital refused to say why these workers — many of whom had made no secret they planned to join NUHW — weren't brought aboard.



NUHW filed an unfair labor charge with the National Labor Relations Board contending the hospital "has applied a verbal English test not related to the job" to its housekeepers. The English requirement doesn't explain why these longtime workers were let go since most speak proficient English. The real reason is that the hospital wants to keep its new housekeeping unit union-free.

"They only said that we have to speak English, but a lot of us speak good English," said Celia Ortiz, who had worked at the hospital for 16 years. "I still hope to have my job back. I feel like it's my life in there."

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STAFFING SOLUTIONS

Patients should be turned every two hours to prevent bed sores and pressure ulcers, but given our understaffing, we are not able to do it nearly so often.

Management also committed to our suggestion of having a huddle before every shift so that all team members can share concerns before starting their shifts. For example, one team of nurses might get a high volume of patients who can't feed themselves, which would require more one-on-one time and attention. A huddle would give members the opportunity to communicate with each other and strategize how to share their patient loads. We also proposed a structure to share responsibility among

all nursing staff in response to call lights. When a patient requests assistance, currently only the nurse who is assigned to that patient can respond to that call light. Since a nurse might be busy with another patient, the patient who calls for assistance would have to wait until their assigned nurse is available. Another issue is that staff does not have the ability to give the dispatcher a response or status update, for example, whether they can respond immediately or in ten minutes.

Management said they will have a new response system for us in a few weeks. We were glad that management seemed responsive to our suggestions, but we will continue to monitor these developments and follow up with management about their commitments at our next labor-management meeting.





GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Kindred Westminster
Every Tuesday
6 – 8:30 p.m.

Kindred Brea
Every Wednesday
6 – 8:30 p.m.

*For more information, please contact your NUHW organizers
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