



# NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Seton Medical Center • Seton Coastside

**APRIL 2017**

## Letter from CEO John Ferrelli

When I joined the organization some 18 months ago I made a commitment to the employees that I would communicate with you through the appropriate channels about any changes that would impact you and your work.

Through your recent feedback I became aware of a rollout of staffing changes. I now understand that these changes had not been communicated to you before they occurred. As a result, I have directed that these changes be rolled back. You and/or your union will be notified in advance of any changes.

As we are in a turnaround, it is important that we make changes as necessary to ensure the health and vitality of Seton Medical Center. However, major changes must be done in the appropriate manner and through appropriate channels.

I want to encourage all staff to continue to engage management and provide feedback. Together in Health we can do great things.



## MEMBERS BUILD STRENGTH AND UNITY THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

In recent months, Seton and Coastside management undermined patient care by reducing staffing levels and increasing caregiver workloads. Management made these changes unilaterally, without consulting or bargaining with our union. In response, dozens of NUHW members at the two facilities organized a series of workplace actions. We succeeded in making our voices heard and asserting our rights as a union. We even received an apology letter from management acknowledging their short-sighted strategy. See box at left.

### Coastside members speak out at Ferrelli's employee forum

About forty Coastside stewards and members attended CEO John Ferrelli's employee forum on March 20. During the question-and-answer session, these members spoke out against staffing changes, demanded to meet with Ferrelli, and delivered a petition signed by more than eighty Coastside members.

As a result of these actions, we secured a meeting between Ferrelli and NUHW stewards, who demanded that management and our union work together to solve staffing and other issues. Management accepted our proposal to establish a Joint Labor Management/Patient Care Committee, as a venue to resolve these issues with meetings scheduled for this month. Ferrelli committed to having managers with decision-making power attend the meetings.

### Fourth floor CNAs and LVNs demand halt in staff reductions

Meanwhile, at the end of March, after management tried to reduce staffing on the fourth floor, sub-acute unit, eleven CNAs and LVNs met with management and demanded that they stop the reductions. Members shared their concerns about diminishing patient care standards and management's failure to respect and communicate with frontline caregivers. Yet management still tried to move forward with staffing reductions.

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## SETON NUHW STEWARDS TO RECOMMEND EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

At our next steward council meeting on **May 17**, stewards will vote to recommend two candidates to be approved to serve as vice presidents on the democratically elected NUHW Executive Board.

Vice presidents will be responsible for representing the interests of members at Seton and Seton Coastside at the national level, serving as delegates at conventions, and representing members at community and central labor council meetings. They will also have a voice on other matters, such as the union's budget and the approval of funds to carry out NUHW missions and goals.

## Around the union

More than 60 workers at **Keck Medical Center** at the University of Southern California voted overwhelmingly to join NUHW in the past month. On April 12, workers at Keck's Beverly Hills clinic voted 94 percent voted to join. Six inpatient radiology workers and nearly 40 lab and outpatient radiology workers voted in March to join. Their goals are to improve staffing and the quality of care at the hospital, protect benefits, and achieve parity with their NUHW-represented colleagues at Keck. We now represent more than 1,000 workers at USC facilities.

Service and technical workers at **UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland** won a three-year contract, totaling 14% wage increases, including across-the-board increases, retroactive pay, and market adjustments for all employees. Workers also won improvements in other areas, including shift differentials, tuition reimbursement, meal allowance, and more. NUHW represents two additional bargaining units at the hospital.

Sterile processing techs at Napa's **Queen of the Valley** organized their co-workers in other departments to join them in a march on the boss to address chronic understaffing and poor communications at the hospital. In their meeting with the hospital's CEO, they outlined issues and asked management to take specific, concrete steps to resolve them. Management committed to deal with these staffing issues by hiring and strategically using more per diems, and to respond soon with a more thorough plan.

## NUHW MEMBERS TAKE PART IN THE RESISTANCE

Throughout the state, scores of NUHW members are engaged in the resistance movement to defend working people, immigrants, and an equitable healthcare system.

NUHW members' commitment was on full display at many town halls. At Congressman Barbara Lee's joint town hall with Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan, dozens of workers from UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland gathered with more than 500 Oakland residents to discuss the importance of retaining services and care through the Affordable Care Act. NUHW members also participated in Assemblymember Jim Wood's town hall in Eureka and Congressman Mike Thompson's town hall in Napa. At these town halls, many participants provided powerful testimonials about their own experiences trying to navigate our complex and often problematic healthcare system.

NUHW members were also out in full force to defend our right to healthcare. Kaiser IBHS and Optical leaders joined hundreds of their neighbors at a community meeting at the Maidu Community Center in Roseville on March 26 to champion Medicare for All in the



Providence St. Joseph workers in Humboldt County rally for healthcare for all.



UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland workers at Congressman Barbara Lee and Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan's town hall.

form of SB 562: The Healthy California Act. Introduced in February by state Senators Ricardo Lara and Toni Atkins, SB 562 would develop a single-payer Medicare for All system that would establish comprehensive and accessible healthcare for all Californians, regardless of employment or immigration status. NUHW is among a broad array of labor and community groups sponsoring the fight for the Healthy California Act.

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As the staffing reduction fight was raging on the fourth floor, management tried to reduce staffing on other floors. Leaders from the fourth floor and activists from other areas, including sixth-floor CNAs and monitor techs, attended another employee forum held by Ferrelli. They raised concerns about staffing issues and again urged him to stop management from implementing bad staffing decisions and failing to negotiate with the union.

On March 23 at a second meeting for the fourth floor with management, Chief Nursing Officer Kim Pardini-Keily committed to stop staffing changes and to hear our voices through a fair bargaining process. We demanded that an apology letter be posted for members to highlight their mistake and make a promise to do better.

After weeks of collective actions and the participation of members fighting back, we succeeded in making our voices heard and asserting our rights as a union. We still have a long way to go – to work with management through any staffing changes they intend to make. If you'd like to be involved on these Joint Labor Management/Patient Care Committees, please contact your steward or NUHW organizer Laura Watson.

*For more information, please contact NUHW Organizer Laura Watson at (510) 220-4578 or [lwatson@nuhw.org](mailto:lwatson@nuhw.org).*

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