

STRIKE VOTE!

UPCOMING VOTE TO AUTHORIZE A SECOND STRIKE FOR ONE-TO-FIVE DAYS



As a result of management refusing to increase its offer at our last bargaining session, we will be voting to authorize a 1-to-5-day strike. Our Bargaining Team would set the date and the duration of the strike. The team urges everyone to VOTE YES.

THIS IS OUR TIME TO SHOW MANAGEMENT THAT WE ARE DONE BEING TREATED LIKE SECOND CLASS CITIZENS!

VOTE DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 29 AND THURSDAY AUG. 30
6 A.M. TO 7 P.M. (BOTH DAYS)
CAFETERIA

Flip the page to read about our struggle in the Orange County Register.

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Equal pay for equal work in Orange County hospitals

By Jennifer Muir Beuthin

August 19, 2018

Equal pay for equal work — it's a pretty simple fairness doctrine that says no worker, no matter their gender, race or where they live should be paid anything but a fair and equitable wage for the work they do.

So would you believe that more than 100 caregivers at West Anaheim Medical Center earn drastically less than the same workers at another hospital owned by the same corporation just a couple miles away?

The nurses, therapists and other caregivers have spent much of their careers helping patients at Anaheim's second largest for-profit hospital and only recently learned that Prime Healthcare, the hospital's corporate owner, has been dramatically underpaying them for years.

The moment of clarity came after joining the National Union of Healthcare Workers. As contract bargaining got underway, the caregivers learned that nearly all of them earned considerably less than corresponding employees at Garden Grove Medical Center, a nearby Prime Healthcare hospital whose workers unionized long ago.

The wage gap is so severe that even if they hospital provided a 16 percent raise, which it has proposed, starting licensed vocational nurses at West Anaheim would still make nearly \$4 less per hour than their Garden Grove counterparts. Respiratory therapists would start out making \$8 less, which adds up to more than \$16,000 over the course of a year.

This disparity not only is unfair; it also impacts patient care.

Because wages are low, many caregivers at West Anaheim must work two jobs. To help support his wife and two children, Arnulfo Pradera, a nurse, works full-time at the hospital and part-time at the Healthcare Center of Orange County. Phung Pham, a respiratory therapist for more than eight years at West Anaheim, travels 26 miles to a second job to help provide for his two daughters.

There is no question that Prime Healthcare can afford

to pay these health care professionals the same wages it pays comparable employees at its other hospitals.

Last year, West Anaheim, which has 219 beds, posted a \$28 million operating profit, making it Prime Healthcare's third most profitable Southern California hospital.

Even senior Trump Administration officials are sounding the alarm about companies hoarding profits and impoverishing their workers. Last month, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, a Trump appointee, lamented that the share of the national income going to American labor had fallen "precipitously" for more than a decade, and was not reversing course despite the strong economy.

Yet the company, whose 14 California hospitals made \$55.3 million in 2016, still seems intent on trying to keep West Anaheim as its corporate cash register to the detriment of caregivers and patients.

Usually, hospitals that pay low wages see high rates of staff turnover. West Anaheim is an exception. Its workers have been remarkably loyal; the average tenure is just under 10 years.

So how did Prime Healthcare reward that loyalty? When workers called a one-day strike for Aug. 9 to protest the hospital's long history of low wages, the company retaliated by threatening to lock them out of their jobs for four days. Hospital bosses only relented when it was clear that workers would not be intimidated into calling off the strike.

West Anaheim caregivers have endured years of low pay because they love their work. They don't want to leave their jobs or their patients. They just don't want to be left even further behind in a county that is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

They deserve pay that is equal to their counterparts. So while the raise being offered by Prime Healthcare may sound like progress at first blush, it's actually a tacit admission that the hospital has been underpaying these workers for years and that the company still isn't ready to do the right thing and pay them what they're worth.

NUHW NATIONAL UNION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS