



NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Petaluma Valley • Santa Rosa Valley Memorial • Queen of the Valley
• Providence St. Joseph and Redwood Memorial Hospitals

APRIL 2023

PROVIDENCE HOSPICE WORKERS JOIN OUR UNION

Workers at Providence St. Joseph Health Hospice-affiliated facilities in Sonoma County voted overwhelmingly on February 9 to join NUHW, capping off an organizing drive that started after Providence laid off about 15 of their colleagues.

For the 131 registered nurses, social workers, home health aides, and chaplains joining NUHW, Providence’s takeover of Memorial Hospice, Hospice of Petaluma, and North County Hospice in 2017 has left them fighting to preserve a patient-first culture that made the hospices among the highest-rated in the nation.

“Providence has taken a lot away from us. And they’re not going to get away with it,” said Aidee Garcia, a home health aide who has worked at Memorial Hospice of Santa Rosa for six years. “Joining the union is about protecting my family and our work culture — and protecting our patients, those poor vulnerable people who don’t have a voice.”



Petaluma Valley Hospital members rally to save birthing center from closure

NUHW members at Petaluma Valley Hospital joined with our nurse colleagues on February 15 for a rally to save the hospital’s acclaimed birthing center from closure. After the rally, we attended a meeting of the Petaluma Health Care District during which board members made their opposition to the closure clear to Providence executives.

“My trust is gone, I can’t trust you at all,” Board Member Cheryl Negrin told Providence executive Lauren Driscoll during the public meeting.

The rally and subsequent meeting were also covered by many local media outlets. Providence has \$10 billion in cash reserves and has netted a \$1.38 million profit at Petaluma Valley since buying the hospital at the start of 2021, according to reports filed with the state.

Workers will continue efforts to make Providence honor its agreement to keep the birthing center open at least through 2025 and warned that its closure would put families and babies at risk. Point your camera phone to the QR code and sign our petition to demand Providence keep PVH OB open!



Queen of the Valley Surgical Techs fight for better staffing

Staffing of surgical techs was so dire at Queen of the Valley that at one point only three techs were on staff for the entire hospital. They were working an unbelievable amount of hours, including on-call hours, sometimes only sleeping a couple of hours before heading back into work.

The now steward for the department was fed up and notified the CEO and HR that they were all looking for other employment and the hospital would be with no surgical techs soon if nothing changed.

The CEO met with the steward to understand the concerns and put together a plan to fix the issue.

The surgical techs were offered a grade increase, retention bonuses, and a commitment to get staffing levels back to normal.

QUEEN OF THE VALLEY NURSING ASSISTANTS MARCH ON THE BOSS

After almost of year of being promised the opportunity to bargain a clinical ladder, the nursing assistants marched on the Chief Nursing Officer. They delivered a letter and had an on-the-spot meeting with the CNO to voice their frustration. Shortly after, they were given two new job descriptions as part of a clinical ladder, which we are now bargaining on.



OUR CONTRACT: Weekend Work

Our contract includes language about working weekends. Even if you are a variable employee, unless you were specifically hired to work weekends, you should have every other weekend off. "Variable" means that you don't have a home shift (AM, EVE, NOC). Our contract states "A weekend is defined as two (2) work days, which are Saturday and Sunday for the day and evening shifts and Friday and Saturday for the night shift. Employees shall be off every other weekend except Employees who hold positions which normally includes working every weekend or Employees who elect in writing to work additional weekend shifts. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit a department from creating a schedule that allows for additional weekends off provided such a schedule meets staffing needs, does not compromise patient care, and does not violate any other Sections of this Agreement."

PETALUMA VALLEY

Mid-contract per diem availability changes

Per diem requirements at PVH were cut in half just days before arbitration. Our union pushed back against PVH to come to an agreement on new per diem requirements that were more practical for a per diem schedule. See below for the wording changes:

OLD WORDING	NEW WORDING
<p>I. A Relief Employee working eight (8) hour shifts must provide availability for a minimum of sixteen (16) shifts per month, of which at least eight (8) must be weekend shifts.</p> <p>II. A Relief Employee working ten (10) hour shifts must provide availability for a minimum of twelve (12) shifts per month, of which at least six (6) must be weekend shifts.</p> <p>III. A Relief Employee working twelve (12) hour shifts must provide availability for a minimum of ten (10) shifts per month, of which at least five (5) must be weekend shifts.</p>	<p>I. Four (4) weekend shifts over two (2) weekends each month; or five (5) weekend shifts over three (3) weekends per 6-week schedule.</p> <p>II. Four (4) weekday shifts per month; or six (6) weekday shifts per 6-week schedule.</p> <p>III. Total minimum availability of eight (8) shifts per month; or eleven (11) shifts per 6-week schedule.</p> <p><i>*Relief employees may only provide availability for the shift zone(s) for which they were hired</i></p>



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**STEWARD SPOTLIGHT:
RUBALIT (RUBY) SIERRA**

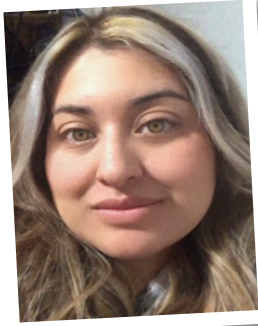
St. Joseph Hospital Surgical Tech Rubalit “Ruby” Sierra is very family oriented.

“I like to hang out with my mom and do family dinners. Every weekend we’re either doing a carne asada or eating together,” says the mom of two.

Ruby sees her coworkers as family too. “We’re spending 40 hours at work. I spend more time with them than with my own family.”

In early 2021, Ruby moved to her current department and noticed the hospital was violating the union contract by sending her coworkers home early when work diminished, or not following seniority.

She became a steward to band together with her coworkers to enforce our union contract. One of her major achievements was helping secure back pay for a coworker who was put in a lead role without the added pay guaranteed by our collective agreement.



“We filed a grievance and she was compensated for working all those hours,” said Ruby, who saw her coworker’s morale go up. “I was just happy that she felt supported and she got compensated for working really hard.”

Her work as a steward has also earned her the respect of her new manager, who sought Ruby’s help when crafting a new 12-hour work schedule. “My manager has been very good in that she asks me to make sure we’re following the union contract,” she said. “I’ve shown her that all we want is to make sure things are fair.”

And fairness is what she’s always striving for. “If you see something that’s not right, it’s up to you to speak up. It’s about being fair and equal. If you see something’s not fair, and you don’t speak, you’re just as guilty.”



HUMBOLDT COUNTY RTs WIN EXTRA SHIFT BONUS

After being excluded from the most recent extra shift bonus, Respiratory Therapists had enough and demanded that the hospital include RTs who work extra shifts as well.

After circulating a petition that got hundreds of signatures throughout the hospital, folks met with HR and demanded the hospital do better.

But this isn’t just about RTs, it’s the fact that the hospital continues to pick and choose who’s extra work they will and won’t recognize. We must stand up against these inconsistencies. We all work hard and deserve to be compensated for our contributions equally!

HUMBOLDT COUNTY MRI Techs stop change in working conditions

As a union, we have the right to collectively bargain over any/all changes in working conditions. What is a change in working condition? In late February, management told MRI techs that they now had to sign up for on-call shifts after 11 p.m.

The MRI techs immediately demanded this change stop until we’ve had the opportunity to meet with the hospital and explain why it’s a terrible idea. Specifically, there hasn’t been the staffing to support additional on-call hours. After the meeting and continued talks with the Director, the change was stopped and management agreed to hire two additional MRI techs for overnight coverage, eliminating the need to force the current techs to take overnight calls.

Any time you and your coworkers are faced with changes in your working conditions, you have a right to collectively bargain over them!

Tarzana workers win a new contract!

This January, after authorizing a five day strike, members at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center in Southern California won major victories in their new contract that include significant wage and premium pay increases, a stricter subcontracting ban, time requirements on the posting/filling of vacant positions, and more! On average, wages increase over 40% across the four years of the agreement. Next year, all of our Northern California hospitals will be negotiating a new contract that improves our pay, benefits, and working conditions.

