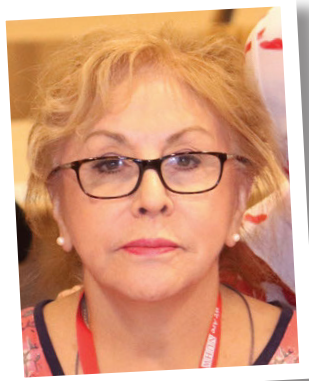




NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medica Center

FEBRUARY 2022



**STEWARD SPOTLIGHT:
JULIA SIDROW-THOMPSON**

When Julia Sidrow-Thompson first began working at Providence Cedars- Sinai Tarzana Medical Center she faced a lot of discrimination. Of Italian and Peruvian heritage, the monitor tech had recently arrived in the United States. “I suffered a lot of racism and inequality,” she said. That’s why she’s quick to protect her co-workers whenever she sees any injustices from management. “I want to protect them and let them know that they have rights. I know how to fight back,” she said.

Julia has been fighting on behalf of coworkers for a long time. She is a founding member of NUHW and has been a steward at the hospital since Tarzana workers first joined the Union. “I feel good that whatever sacrifices I did have paid off. Our

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ER registration associate Guillermo Chavez (left) and radiology department members James Paredes, Juan Arreola, Ali Mehdi, and Alex Alcantara during a sticker up.

2021: A YEAR IN REVIEW

NUHW members who have been on the frontline of the pandemic since 2020 were hoping 2021 would bring a renewed sense of normalcy and appreciation for our work and sacrifices. Instead, we had to fight once again for what we deserve against a hospital management that turned a blind eye to our plight.

At Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center, NUHW members continued to raise the alarm on COVID-19. Throughout 2021, we held regular calls with Human Resources on how to best protect workers against the pandemic, advocating for increased supply of PPE, enforcement of health and safety practices, cohorting of patients, better staffing and access to vaccines.

We are renewing these calls amid another epidemic surge, which is also impacting our hospital. According to California Department of Public Health,

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WORKERS FACE LAYOFFS AMIDST A PANDEMIC

Members’ unity was paramount in June of 2021 when patient visitor reps and techs at the Women’s Diagnostic & Outpatient Imaging Centers became alarmed at rumors of a closure. Patients had begun to request copies of their medical files, but no formal notice of a closure had been announced.

Our members quickly mobilized and reviewed Article 4.2 of our contract (“Reduction in Force and Recall”) to reduce the impact of the 14 layoffs. Management initially said techs would not have a right to transfer to vacant positions within the hospital, but members voiced their opposition and pressured the CEO, Nick Lymberopolous, to meet with the department.

In the end, a radiology tech transferred to a vacant post and the rest either transferred to another Providence site or took the severance package, which honored all their years of service.

2021: A YEAR IN REVIEW

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the hospital was in the top half in Los Angeles County with the highest percentage of COVID-19 to total patients hospitalized.

Many of our coworkers have contracted COVID-19 through workplace and community exposures. A January 13th hospital bulletin states that employees infected should complete a 10-day quarantine. However, at least two workers reported being asked to come in despite being sick. Another was warned of being disciplined for calling out sick and not having a doctor's note. Workers in the ED and DOU are being ordered to wear an N95 face mask and face shield from now on.

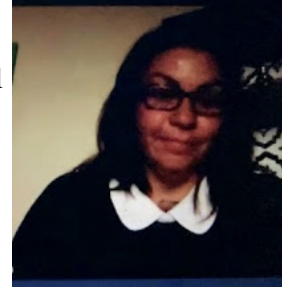
Save Staffing, Stop Flexing

Our work hours vary according to the seasons: summers are slow months of more frequent flexing and winters are like a busy bee hive with workers picking up extra shifts. However, when the hospital began to excessively flex us to the point where staffing became unsafe, we reminded them that patient care comes first, and that our contract language outlines a specific process for flexing and requires the hospital to make "every effort to maintain employment and income security" (Article 29- Employment and Income Security). Various departments impacted by the reduction in hours, including Admitting, pushed back on management's efforts to permanently reduce eight hour shifts to six hour shifts and "pre-flex" employees weeks in advance.

The union submitted a request for information on hours worked and flexing practices and Nursing logs. HR agreed to reinstate eight hour shifts and work with management to look at schedules and staffing needs. When we fight, we win!

Healthcare workers are heroes

This past summer our union was recognized by San Fernando Valley Young Democrats. Michelle Bitolas, radiology department steward and hospital employee for 13 years, accepted the 2021 Robert F. Kennedy Award. She shared her experience re-using PPE, dealing with never ending changes in CDC recommendations and self quarantines from loved ones when exposed on the job.



"This time period was really difficult, and unfortunately my hospital did not have my back when I caught COVID. I was told to prove I caught COVID on the job after doing X-rays on multiple COVID patients everyday and that my symptoms weren't COVID symptoms because I didn't have a fever or cough even though I tested positive," she said, adding "I had to go out on a leave of absence because of my breathing complications from asthma, fatigue and memory loss issues."

Michelle expressed her disappointment in the hospital's decision to lay off many of her coworkers in order to balance their budget and increase their profits, even if it meant at the expense of our livelihoods. "But we are resilient. I know I am not the only person to experience this-- getting COVID or getting laid off-- so this award goes out especially to them."

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: JULIA SIDROW-THOMPSON

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organization is growing," said Julia, who is very proud of seeing how NUHW has developed over the years to over 15,000 union members

Her mission, she says, is simple: "To protect our members, my co-workers. I'm a fighter, I speak loud and clear," she said. "If my co-workers don't want to talk, I'm their voice."

Over the past two years her focus has been advocating for co-workers in the midst of the pandemic. Many of her co-workers got sick in the previous COVID-19 waves and many are sick now, some expected to come to work in that condition and/or use their PTO for their recuperating time, something she doesn't agree with. "This is wrong," she said flatly. "PTO- you earned it, you decide how and when you're going to use it. It's not for Providence to tell you how to use the PTO."

Julia is also quick to intercede if she sees any manager abusing their authority, which along with her seniority, make her the go-to person if anyone needs help.



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