

NUHW at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital

The National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) represents 740 caregivers at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital (SRMH). Workers have been bargaining successor contracts since June 2019. NUHW members are currently on the frontlines of Sonoma County’s response to COVID-19, despite being without a fair contract. On July 9, NUHW filed notice of a 5-day strike, from Monday, July 20 through Friday, July 24, 2020.

NUHW members at Petaluma Valley Hospital, Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa, and St. Joseph Hospital – Eureka and Redwood Memorial Hospital in Humboldt County, which are also owned by WA state-based Providence (formerly Providence St. Joseph Health), recently ratified contracts with Providence. SRMH—the sole Level II trauma center in the four-county region—is the only Providence-affiliated Northern California hospital without a contract.

I. NUHW’S MEMBERS AT SANTA ROSA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

- 740 nursing, technical, and support staff in over 100 job classifications, including Nursing Assistants, Housekeepers, Dietary Aides, Radiologic Technologists, Pharmacy Technicians, Respiratory Therapists, and Registrars.
- Over half of NUHW members at SRMH live in Santa Rosa, and others are concentrated in Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Windsor, Sebastopol and Healdsburg.
- Many caregivers at the hospitals served Sonoma County during recent wildfire seasons, even as they were evacuated themselves.

II. STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Now more than ever, living wages, reliable paid leave and affordable health insurance are non-negotiable for healthcare workers, who are putting their lives at risk to protect and care for our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare workers can’t fight COVID-19 if they can’t afford to keep themselves healthy. NUHW has been fighting for a contract that protects the health and welfare of members for a full year. On November 20, 2020, NUHW members at SRMH held an informational picket, and members at Petaluma Valley Hospital conducted a simultaneous strike. Despite our efforts to communicate the necessity of improving wages and benefits, the hospital has continued to propose three critical takeaways:

1. Steep cost increases for health plans: For caregivers who insure their families under the popular PPO plan, annual premiums could soar from \$1,887 per year to \$4,609 by 2024—a 144% increase.
2. Reduction of paid time off accrual for long-time employees, effective in year three of a collective bargaining agreement.
3. The hospital has proposed a wage freeze for the 12 months during which we have been in negotiations, rejecting our proposal for retroactive pay. Since bargaining began, the hospital has only increased their wage proposal by 1.5 percentage points. SRMH caregivers are working with a federal mediator to achieve movement toward fair wages, which is especially urgent given the soaring cost of housing after recent wildfires.

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III. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

In 2019, SRMH reported significant operating profits, and operating margins well over the California average for non-profit hospitals, which is just 1%. The hospital has been consistently profitable, reporting total operating profits of \$201.7 million over the last three fiscal years. Despite these profits, the hospital laid off dozens of caregivers in 2018.

Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital – Financial Performance, FY 2017-19

	Operating Profit	Operating Margin
2017	\$70,172,009	12.94%
2018	\$58,712,075	10.81%
2019	\$72,846,828	11.62%

Source: OSHPD Unaudited Hospital Annual Financial Data.
Fiscal Years 2017, 2018 and 2019

In 2019, Providence reported operating revenue of \$25 billion, an 8% increase since 2017. According to annual financial disclosures, Providence ended 2019 with net operating profits of \$373 million and over \$12.3 billion on hand, in the form of unrestricted cash and investments. Providence spends considerably on executive compensation. Tax documents from 2019 indicate that CEO Rod Hochman received \$10.8 million in total compensation, and the company spent over \$2 million on bonus and incentive payments to 21 Northern California executives.

ABOUT SANTA ROSA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital is the largest general acute care hospital in Sonoma County, responsible for approximately 25% of all patient discharges in the service area. SRMH is the only designated Level II trauma center in the four-county region.

ABOUT NATIONAL UNION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS

The National Union of Healthcare Workers represents more than 15,000 healthcare workers across facilities in California. Its members include registered nurses, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, opticians, certified nursing assistants, dietary aides, respiratory therapists, and housekeepers, among others. In addition to the Providence hospitals in Northern California, NUHW has a bargaining agreement with Providence Tarzana Cedars Sinai Hospital in Southern California.