



NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital

OCTOBER 2021



STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: CHUCK DESEPTE

You might say union blood runs through Chuck Desepte's veins.

His family history has been tied with labor movements for at least three generations.

"My grandfather [Warren G. 'Pop' Desepte] was the first vice president of the Retail Clerks International. He fought for very basic things like a standard wage and decent working hours. Clerks often worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week. He travelled the country organizing and getting arrested," said Chuck, an X-ray technician in Santa Rosa Memorial's Imaging Department.

Chuck's father, Werner Desepte, continued that commitment to workers' rights as a shop steward and negotiating team member at KRON 4 TV in San Francisco.

And now Chuck is carrying the family legacy forward.

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MEMBERS MARCH ON THE BOSS TO DEMAND INCLUSION IN BONUS PROGRAM



Throughout the pandemic, NUHW members have protested multiple layoffs and severe short staffing in the Providence network while the company's cash reserves grew to \$15.3 billion in 2020.

At Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, for instance, the new Human Resources director recently approached a steward on the Labor-Management Committee for union help addressing the lack of sufficient phlebotomists in the hospital's inpatient lab, which is causing delays in blood draws. At the next labor-management meeting, another steward reported that over the past six months, Lab managers had systematically eliminated numerous shifts, claiming the hospital was 'not busy enough to have so many working every

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STEWARD STEPS IN TO SOLVE PAY DIFFERENTIAL MISTAKE

When a per diem employee in her first year of employment in the Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital Imaging Department learned from a co-worker that she was supposed to receive an in-lieu-of-benefits differential of 15 percent of her wage rate, she wondered why she was not receiving it.

She sought help from one of the NUHW stewards in the Imaging Department who advised her to tell her manager and "open a ticket" in the hospital's automated online HR portal. When her manager denied responsibility for solving the problem, steward Chuck Desepte emailed the HR representative. Within a few days, the employee was told she would be paid the differential retroactive to her hire date and would also receive it going forward.

MEMBERS MARCH ON BOSS

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day', something HR was unaware of.

To ease this crisis, Providence rolled out bonus programs across its hospitals in the past month. While they may have good intentions, the programs have been unequal and poorly crafted, leaving many of our members out. Even worse, they were implemented without first negotiating with NUHW, as required by our contract.

That's why stewards and NUHW members from Providence hospitals in Northern California decided to take action. In a coordinated effort, stewards at each hospital marched on management September 17 to deliver a demand letter. We said that if Providence is serious about addressing the staffing crisis in our hospitals, they must sit down with all of us to discuss solutions.

Our action is paying off! Just last week, members in Patient Access Services departments got word they would be included in the bonus program. This is just a start, we'll keep up the pressure and continue to fight for all of our departments to be properly staffed and compensated!



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PTO IS NOT FOR TRAINING

Urgent Care workers were incorrectly told they had to use their own PTO to be paid for participating in training sessions for the hospital's new electronic medical records. After bringing the matter to the attention of a NUHW steward, the employees were paid from the correct source and had their PTO restored.

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: CHUCK DESEPTE

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He has been in unions during his entire career in health care, but for many years he simply participated in actions and voted on contracts.

That changed in 2018 when NUHW began negotiating a new contract at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. His department didn't have a steward at the time and "I felt I needed to be involved, because I knew St. Joseph/Providence would take away so much from us."

He got into the bargaining process early and played an important role during the 19 months of negotiations and actions that ultimately led to a new four-year contract.

"I got heavily involved with the sticker-up, the info picket and ultimately the strike," said Chuck, recalling the five-day work stoppage in July 2020 before ratifying a four-year contract in December. "I was organizing and getting people behind that."

He says he learned a lot during those 19 months.

"Now I know the only way to stop the takeaways is to strengthen our union by getting as many members involved," said Chuck.

And the work doesn't end when the contract is ratified. It must then be enforced and defended.

"The contract is not just about wages and benefits, it covers every aspect of our work. It must be followed. Every time management breaks any part of it, it weakens us. They know that and push it all the time. Each one of us can have a part in this struggle," said Chuck.

As a steward, Chuck advocates and advises workers whenever they have a problem. It's a surefire way to spread the word about the importance of the union.

"If I do a good deed for them, they're going to tell other people," he said. Chuck also continues trying to get members involved in leadership roles. "I feel we can be a lot stronger," he said. "This is a struggle and if you don't fight, you can lose."

"The union is us. Some people say, 'But I pay my dues.' I get that. But if you want it to be a strong union, you're going to have to do something. And it doesn't have to be anything big. It starts with knowing your contract, and if something is not living up to it, you need to say something," he adds.

Chuck understands some members may have initial apprehensions about stepping up and becoming a steward.

"It's scary for me at times," he admitted. "But if we all stand up, we can do it, and you learn it's not so scary."