

THE UNION TALKS



What bargaining looks like when you're in it---Photo taken at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco. CHW bargaining representatives are seated on the left, while the SEIU-UHW team sits across from them, and at a table in the foreground (not shown). The UHW team consists of two elected union member representatives from each of the 28 CHW hospitals in California. The CHW bargaining team includes people from Benefits, Human Resources, and Corporate administration.

July August 2006
Volume 5 Issue 3

This is an MGH employee-produced bimonthly newsletter. It reports union activities & issues for employees represented by SEIU-UHW.



Letters and suggestions are welcome- send to dillwood@sbcglobal.net
Ellen Dillinger, Editor

INSIDE

- Lost-time Report
- Respiratory Victory
- Photos
- UHW/MGH chairpersons
- Shop Steward meetings

An online copy of this newsletter as well as information and photographs of Sacramento union events can be seen at <http://dillingertoons.net>

BARGAINING FOR RETIREE MEDICAL BENEFITS

It's extremely challenging to work in an industry such as healthcare, where the wheels are spinning desperately to maintain a system that appears to require a complete overhaul.

With more than 45 million people uninsured in the U.S. and healthcare costs rising even for those with insurance, it's clear that our health care delivery system needs to change.

However, it hasn't changed yet, which is why we, as a union, are bargaining for medical benefits for retirees and why CHW is fighting to curb employee healthcare benefit costs. If we, like most European countries and Canada, had a single-payer health plan, we wouldn't be bargaining this issue, because all of us,

retired or not, would have access to health care.

But, in our current reality as employees of CHW hospitals in California, U.S.A., when we retire, we will not have health insurance. If we hang on until age 65, we will be eligible for Medicare but will need to buy a health insurance plan to supplement what Medicare doesn't pay for. If we falter and retire before 65, we will be eligible for up to 36 months of COBRA and Cal-COBRA (a continuation of current group health plan, but YOU pay the total premium). When this expires, you are on your own in the world of high cost individual health plans.

It is with this backdrop that our union is bargaining for retiree medical benefits.

On the surface, this should be easy—both SEIU and CHW have as their mission expanding access to affordable, quality healthcare, and both want CHW to be "an Employer of Choice." Providing retiree medical benefits would seem to satisfy both of these goals, but as of mid-June, 2006, no agreement has been reached.

Instead, in addition to retiree health, we have been discussing proposals to change existing CHW employee health plans and tighten eligibility requirements for legally domiciled adults. By contract, any change must achieve "substantially equivalent in the aggregate benefits" to CHW employees.

continued on page 3

Earlier this year, SEIU members were invited to attend meetings around the State in order to interview candidates for political offices, including Governor of California. Phil Angelides was then selected by SEIU members as the candidate who best supports the interests of the members our union represents....Editor

A “LOST-TIMER” REPORTS ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Recently, my Field Rep. Josie Summers, gave me the privilege and opportunity to participate in the political dynamics that our Union (SEIU-UHW) employs in campaigning for Union-endorsed political candidates. I was given a 12 day leave of absence (referred to as “lost time”) from my employer, CHW, and was paid by the Union to work towards the election of Phil Angelides, Governor/ and Larry Carr, Second District Supervisor/ in the June 6th Democratic primary. Under the brilliant guidance of our Local’s political coordinator, Guy Rinfrow, I became involved in accomplishing many tasks.

I walked precincts and knocked on doors and engaged in conversations with voters to persuade them to vote for Phil Angelides and Larry Carr. I walked the halls of our State Capitol to encourage legislators to vote yes on Bill 2754 –(*Safe Staffing in Healthcare Facilities* – and this bill passed!) I was involved in Phone Banking; I would call voters to persuade them to vote for our endorsed candidates. I attended meetings and helped assemble precinct information in binders. I dropped off campaign literature in various neighborhoods that were composed of a high density of union employees. On the last four days of the campaign, our organization concentrated on the GET OUT THE VOTE process. This required many members to precinct walk and drop off literature to various union members and voters to remind them to vote on June 6, and we compiled data on

who voted at their polling locations.

I was also given the opportunity to film much of this process and perhaps this video may be eventually used to train others in our campaigning techniques and political process.

Ultimately, Phil Angelides won the primary for Governor. The race was extremely close and it became evident that through the efforts of our Union and other labor organizations, Phil Angelides won this race, and that we made the difference.

Unfortunately, Larry Carr lost in his bid for Second District Supervisor. Nevertheless, considering that Carr was running against Jimmie Yee (a former Mayor and City Councilman in Sacramento for over 10 years and who was also endorsed by the outgoing Supervisor, Illa Collin and Mayor Heather Fargo) Carr still managed to garner 33 per cent of the vote. There’s always next time!

As a “Lost timer” I quickly learned the importance of our COPE contributions and saw how these funds are applied effectively. It is the Union’s imperative as it should be for all of us, to elect political candidates that are committed to representing, protecting



and improving the rights, wages, and benefits of all working families. Becoming involved in this dynamic political process and interacting with the members and staff that shared this common goal was an experience that renewed my spirit and broadened my political consciousness.

I am very grateful to Guy Rinfrow, Josie Summers, John Borsos, Morgan Gay, Manny Hernandez (CWA) and the Union Staff for treating me with consideration, kindness, and respect. The positive lessons and wealth of experience that I acquired during this brief time was immense. We, as Union members, should all become involved and active in this political process to protect our futures and to ensure that we remain a strong, viable and dynamic organization.

SEIU-UHW WORKERS UNITE!
Your opportunity to participate awaits you for the Fall elections!

Nicholas Stanley,
Shop Steward, MGH

Another Victory for Respiratory Therapists

A temporary Settlement Agreement has been reached regarding the emergency scheduling of Respiratory Therapists at Mercy General Hospital in reference to the filling of vacancies in the posted schedule in the Respiratory Therapy Department.

The agreement is the result of bargaining between SEIU Field Representative Josie Summers, Shop Stewards/ Respiratory Therapists Dawna Sabin, Kristie Haywood, Jan Karbowski (MGH), Erin O'Neill (MSJMC) and MGH Respiratory Therapist Mario Ramano, along with Shop Stewards Raj Dayal (UHW Representative Chair, MGH) and Sharon Martinez (Alternate Rep. Chair, MGH), Sheri Macias (UHW Rep Chair, MSJMC), MGH Human Resources representatives Jim Anderson and Mary Gaines, Respiratory Therapy Manager Jim Roxburgh and RT Supervisor Johnny Pugh.

It was agreed that the Employer take the following action effective May 1,



2006 through August 31, 2006:

1) Implement a temporary, emergency extra shift "pick-up" pay of \$200.00 applicable to all qualified, benefited Respiratory Therapists who volunteer to work an extra vacant shift on the current posted schedule. The emergency extra shift "pick-up" pay applies to any qualified shift picked up including those resulting in a double shift, and/or any qualified shift picked-up but resulting in involuntary HC.

2) The employer agrees to pay qualified benefited Respiratory Therapists who volunteer to work a vacant shift on the posted schedule in the Respiratory Therapy Department, including the Labor and Delivery Unit, a call-back pay rate of 1 ½ times base rate (time and one half).

3) The "Call Back/Stand-by" agreement signed on March 30, 2006 will be discontinued upon on April 30, 2006.

4) The Stand-by agreement currently in place in the Labor and Delivery Unit will remain in effect.

5) The Emergency extra shift pick up pay will be retroactively applied to qualified Respiratory Therapists who volunteered to work vacant shifts on the current posted schedule in the Labor and Delivery Unit beginning March 29, 2006.

Congratulations RT's !!!!!

Sharon Martinez
PAC Chair

BARGAINING FOR RETIREE MEDICAL BENEFITS continued from page 1

So where are we?

As of this writing, there is agreement on a wellness program, and an agreement that prescription drug co-pays will not increase. Union bargaining team members from hospitals in the West Bay (S.F.) and Northstate (Redding/ Shasta) have been meeting separately over CHW-proposed chang-

es in their health plans. Northstate reached agreement on June 15 but West Bay is still out.

Proposals have been made on both sides for a retiree medical health benefit, but as of the last comprehensive bargaining session on June 2nd, in Sacramento, the two sides were far from agreement on a satisfactory plan.

For further updates, watch for union flyers!

--Ellen Dillinger, Bargaining Committee member.

is an injury

MGH Steward Chairs

Chief Steward
Raj Dayal
Home: 729-8187
Work: 453-4084

COPE Chair (alt.Chief)
Sharon Martinez
Home: 372-2145
Work: 453-4440

Mobilizer Chair
Kathy Stegall
Home: 682-0844
Work: 453-4553

Secretary Chair/Editor
Ellen Dillinger
Home: 441-3468
Work: 453-4138

SEIU UHW-West Field Representative:

Josie Summers: 275-6342

See list of Shop Stewards on Main Union bulletin Board near Cafeteria.



SEIU-UHW bargaining team members from MHS during session at St. Mary Hospital in Long Beach. Nikki Sparks (MFH) far left by window, Shannon McDonald (MSJMC), Ellen Dillinger (MGH) and Nick Stanley (MGH), front left to right. This photo was taken during a caucus while CHW's bargaining team was elsewhere. Note voluminous paperwork on tables....
Photo Credit: Preston Garrison, MSJMC

STEWARD MEETINGS

**Every third Wednesday,
Time: 2 p.m.- 5 p.m.
LOCATION VARIES**

It is the responsibility of the shop steward to inform their dept.manager in a timely manner of release time required for shop stewards' meeting.

June 21 Greenhouse A&B

**July 19 4101 J St
Conference Room**

**Aug 16 Greenhouse A&B
Sep 20 Greenhouse A&B**

**Oct 18 4101 J St
Conference Room**

**Nov 15 Greenhouse A&B
Dec 20 Greenhouse A&B**



Martha Vazquez, SEIU bargaining team member from St. Joseph's, delivering petitions to CHW's bargaining team, signed by close to 8,000 UHW members from CHW hospitals around the state. The petitions pledged our support for the Bargaining Committee's goal of negotiating a Retiree Health Benefits package that meets the standards our union has set for the industry.

An inconvenient truth...

None of this is going to matter one bit if we don't actively respond to the threat of global warming. The health of the planet and our ability to live here depends on it.

Don't miss Al Gore's documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth" currently showing at the Tower Theater.

---Ellen

to all.