

The Voice of SEIU Local 250 Members working at Mercy Hospitals in the Sacramento area.

"The boss doesn't listen when one guy squawks, but s/he's gotta listen when

# THE UNION TALKS

## UNION SAYS:

### "CHANGES MUST BE BARGAINED!"

July 2003

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This is an MHS employee-produced monthly newsletter. It will report union activities and issues from facilities represented by SEIU Local 250.

Letters and suggestions are welcome-  
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#### INSIDE

- Patient Care Comm.
- Hospital Convenience
- Budget Accountability



Ellen Dillinger (MGH), Editor, welcomes you to this shortened "Vacation Edition" of The Union Talks.

An online copy of this newsletter as well as information and photographs of Sacramento union events can be seen at

<http://dillingertoons.net>

Why can't you perform your job with the speed and efficiency a computer model says you should?" Would your department be more efficient if there were 25% fewer of you?

Productivity standards in CHW's California hospitals became a hot topic between CHW and SEIU Local 250 in March when CHW proposed a plan to cut \$60 million in labor costs for the fiscal year starting July 1st, 2003. Citing its right to bargain any change,

our Union responded with a request for the financial information that would show that these cuts were necessary for the survival of CHW hospitals. We also requested the specific cuts in jobs that CHW planned to make.

The July deadline was nearly upon us when Union shop stewards led by Local 250 VP John Borsos met with MHS management

at MSJMC on June 23 to discuss the cuts. What followed was a presentation by MHS CEO's that described for each hospital its patient satisfaction survey results,

own financial statements showed earnings of more than \$105,000,000 in the years 2001-2003. From these numbers, MHS does not appear to be on the



SEIU Local 250 VP John Borsos explaining the Union's position on CHW proposed changes during a meeting between Local 250 MHS shop stewards and MHS administration. The Union also had a change to propose. (See story continuation, page 3).

clinical outcomes, a financial overview, and plans for future capital expenditures. This was followed by their reasons for requiring cuts, their alternatives to these cuts, and a proposed action plan that included some fairly specific cuts in different departments.

Given the problems in our workplace, most of us would say that staffing should be increased, not cut. CHW's

brink of financial ruin. It appears from other information that CHW wants to make these cuts to improve its bond rating in order to position itself for future growth.

Should the Union assist CHW in cutting Union-represented jobs?

The Union doesn't think so. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

**An injury**

# THE UNION TALKS

## PATIENT CARE COMMITTEE COMMENCES

All 12 members of the Patient Care Committee met on June 11<sup>th</sup> to begin what could be a great tool in improving and maintaining a high standard of patient care at Mercy General. Management and employee representatives met to propose guidelines for the meetings and get the first topic of discussion underway. The hope of everyone present was to improve all aspects of patient care at Mercy General.

It was agreed to meet bimonthly and plan the agenda in advance at each meeting. This would make the best use of our two hours each session.



Cynthia Kirch, HR representative and Lorenza Clausen, Radiology were selected as the point persons and the go between's outside of meetings. Sally Carroll, Respiratory,

Jill Diebert, LVN, Jo McRae, CAN, Stephanie Rhodus-Cortese, LVN and Bill Watson, Monitor Tech 2 East complete the patient care staff members. Jane Crable, RN Cardiac Services Manager, Lynda Gregory, HR Director, Allison Jones, RN Manager, Cindy Mayo, RN Director of Nursing and

Parrish Scarbrough, Imaging Services Manager represent management. Josie Summers will be present for SEIU and Ellen Dillinger will be present to take minutes.

The next meeting is set for June 26<sup>th</sup>. In future discussions we hope to include members from departments pertinent to topics presented. The committee hopes to include additional staff, as needed, to complement discussions and provide additional expert information. We ask employees to feel free to bring ideas on patient care issues in their respective departments to any of the committee members for possible consideration in our discussions.

...Lorenza Clausen (MGH)



For information, call Josie Summers, Field Rep (916) 275-6342

## 2004 CONTRACT CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE

Bargaining Goals: What's next?

DATE: Saturday, July 19th, 2003

TIME: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

WHERE: Oakland Marriott Hotel/City Center  
1001 Broadway---- Adjacent to 12th Street Bart station  
Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

### IN CASE YOU WERE WORRIED.....

The SF Business Times /June 12-19 2003 reported that Catholic Healthcare West is positioned for "solid year-end results, according to a recent Standard and Poor's report. The system posted operating income of \$49.3 million for the nine months that ended March 31st. "That puts the system well ahead of its 2003 fiscal year projection, which was \$10 million," Lisa Zuckerman, a financial analyst said. ---Meg Walker, Health Care reporter, SF Business Times.

## HOSPITAL CONVENIENCE TIME CALL-OFFS

Another subject for the Patient Care Committee surfaced recently when Oncology was temporarily closed due to low census. LVN's and CNA's were HC'd (sent home on "hospital convenience time") and it appears that contract rules for order of call-off were not followed.

According to the contract, call-offs should be in the following order:

- 1) Registry/Travelers
- 2) Employees receiving double time
- 3) Employees receiving OT
- 4) Temporary employees
- 5) Per Diem employee/supplemental employees
- 6) Part-time employees working shifts over and above their regular schedule,
- 7) Limited part-time employees,
- 8) RSR float
- 9) Regular Full-time employees and part-time employees working their regular schedule.

Within each category, call-offs are by reverse seniority within a department provided that the remaining employees are qualified and able to perform the work. The use of volunteers for call-off or a rotation of call-off voted on by the affected department is allowed by the contract.

### **"CHANGES MUST BE BARGAINED!"** (Continued from page 1)

We do not think that CHW's financial circumstances warrant the proposed job cuts. In fact, our Union contract states that CHW must "make every effort" to avoid lay-offs. Given CHW's expressed wish to cut labor costs, we remain skeptical that "every effort" will be made.

What happens if management proposes a change in your department? According to our contract, all changes in wages and working conditions must be bargained with the union. If the change involves a method or system of delivering patient care,

Can employees apply for unemployment benefits when they are HC'd?  
--Barbara Currie

Editor's note: Employees whose weekly hours are significantly reduced may qualify for unemployment insurance compensation. To file an unemployment claim or for further information call the Employment Development Department at 1-800-300-5616.

Employers who are reducing the hours of their employees also have the option of participating in the Employment Development Department's employer-initiated Work Sharing Program. In this program,

the issue will go to the Patient Care Committee. Unresolved disputes will go to arbitration.

Where do things stand now? In concluding the meeting, it was determined by the Union that it would be useless to meet again until requested information had been received and evaluated. As John Borsos said "it took CHW months to formulate this proposal and we have a right to that long to assess it."

As an additional request, the Union asked to re-open the issue of the



LVNs signing the Union contract in October 2002 after the last long bargaining session. While bargaining, we had worksite problems we were trying to fix, and this was the first time most of us had ever had a voice in the decision making process. Now the challenge is to interpret and enforce the contract.

employees receive unemployment compensation proportionate to their weekly percentage of reduction.

Work Sharing information can be found at <http://www.edd.ca.gov/eddws.htm>.

pension plan at our hospitals. CHW has recently proposed an improvement in the pension plan in its bargaining with the CNA. We think we deserve a pension improvement, and therefore asked CHW to re-open negotiations on this issue. We are awaiting CHW's response.

--Ellen Dillinger, MGH

**\*\*Shop stewards who attended the 6/23 meeting with CHW: code time cards 431 --Special meeting**

### CHIEF SHOP STEWARDS

MGH: TBA  
 METH: Chris Kurpies  
 Work: 423-6176  
 Bruceville Terrace:  
 Christine Thomas  
 684-9265  
 MSJH: Sherri Macias  
 Home: 971-0654  
 Work: 537-5037  
 Woodland Clinic:  
 Refer to union  
 bulletin board for  
 stewards' phone  
 numbers.)

### Local 250 Field Reps

Josie Summers: 275-6342  
 (MGH, METH, BVERR)  
 Edna Hollins 321-2322  
 (MSJH, FOL, WOOD)



SEIU Local 250 staff and union members from Kaiser and MHS hospitals marched with striking SEIU Local 1877 janitors the week of June 16th. Contract bargaining had stalled over the issue of family health care, a benefit janitors have in other California cities. Now, thanks to an innovative and spirited contract campaign, Sacramento's Local 1877 represented janitors have a contract with family health care. Many unions joined State and local politicians in support of the janitors to make Local 1877's contract possible. As we who work in hospitals know, people without health insurance are forced to use the ER as their doctor. This is an inefficient way to provide healthcare, and we are glad the janitors won this healthcare benefit!

### STEWARD MEETINGS

Methodist/Bruceville meets  
 3rd Wed. 1530-1630 hours.  
 Location: Methodist Hospital

Mercy General meets 2nd  
 Wed. at 1630 - 1730 hours.  
 Location: MGH Green-house

Mercy San Juan meets 3rd  
 Thursday, 1800-1900 hours  
 Location: MSJH Conference  
 Room.

Woodland Clinic and Hospital  
 meets 1st thursday, 1730-  
 1830 hours.  
 Location: DCR 3 and 4

Mercy Folsom meets 2nd  
 Tues. 1330 - 1530 hours  
 Location: MHF Conference  
 Room

## California's Budget Process is BRO / KEN

The budget is late, again, and it has been every year since 1986! Jobs and services are threatened.

To prevent this yearly occurrence, a coalition of Californians is collecting signatures to qualify an initiative known as the Budget Accountability Act.

Budget Accountability Act will require legislators to deliver a fair budget, ON TIME. When the State budget deadline is reached, if there's no budget, legislators work for free until a budget is passed. No other bills can be acted on until the budget passes.

The Budget Accountability Act requires California to send voters a pamphlet before each election that summarizes how the state spends its money and how their

elected officials voted.

The Budget Accountability Act will change the supermajority vote requirement to pass a budget and related tax legislation to 55%. (California is one of only 2 other states that requires the 2/3rd vote to pass the budget.)

It will set up a "Rainy Day Fund" to protect services in bad times.

JOIN US! Help gather signatures to qualify the Budget Accountability Act for the March 2004 statewide ballot. Together, we can make this happen!

See your Union Steward for more information or call Sharon Martinez (Shop Steward/Mercy General or Don Stone (Local 250) at (916) 275-4526.

--Sharon Martinez, MGH

**to all.**