UNION SAYS: “CHANGES MUST BE BARGAINED!”

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, 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 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 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)
All 12 members of the Patient Care Committee met on June 11th 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 betweens 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 26th. 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)

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.
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, 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 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**
THE UNION TALKS

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, BVTERR)  
Edna Hollins 321-2322  
(MSJH, FOL, WOOD)

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