

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

WOODLAND HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES WIN UNION CONTRACT AGREEMENT

June 2003
Volume 2, Issue 6



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

Minutes into a strike, bargaining committee members at Woodland Memorial Hospital received a CHW proposal they could agree to which brought them immediate 9% wage increases, and improved health and retirement benefits. In August of this year, they'll go on a Kaiser-based wage scale with increases of as much as 50% for some employees.

The agreement didn't come without a fight, however. Bargaining that started last Fall stalled over wage and benefit issues. In mid May, the Union bargaining committee reacted to CHW's failure to move forward by voting overwhelmingly to strike. The required 10-day notice was delivered to Woodland CEO Meg Cleary, and union members prepared for a strike on May 28th.

As often happens in these matters, a final bargaining session was scheduled for the day before the strike. A session that started on the afternoon of May 27th continued into the morning of the following day. With no agreement in sight, the Union bargaining committee walked

out at 0600 hours, the strike's scheduled starting time, and the strike began.

Very soon after that, the mediator for the bargaining session approached the

- why should we be paid less for it?" a Woodland Memorial employee questioned.

In 2004, 30,000 SEIU healthcare workers at 60 hospitals statewide will be



Local 250 members of the Woodland Memorial bargaining committee Philip Morrison, Elaine Blankenship, Carol Bair, Carmen Flores, Katie Hedrix, Jennifer Fitzer and Dora Luna presented a 10-day strike notice to the hospital CEO when contract bargaining stalled in mid-May. Photo-Edna Hollins

striking bargaining committee members outside with a new CHW proposal. This was ultimately accepted and several hours later the agreement was signed and the strike officially ended.

Woodland Healthcare has long trailed the Sacramento CHW hospitals in wages and benefits. "We do the same work that employees in CHW hospitals in Sacramento do-

bargaining our next Union contract. This will be a chance for workers at all CHW hospitals to achieve parity.

In the meantime, we congratulate Woodland Memorial Local 250 members on their solidarity and resolve in winning this contract!

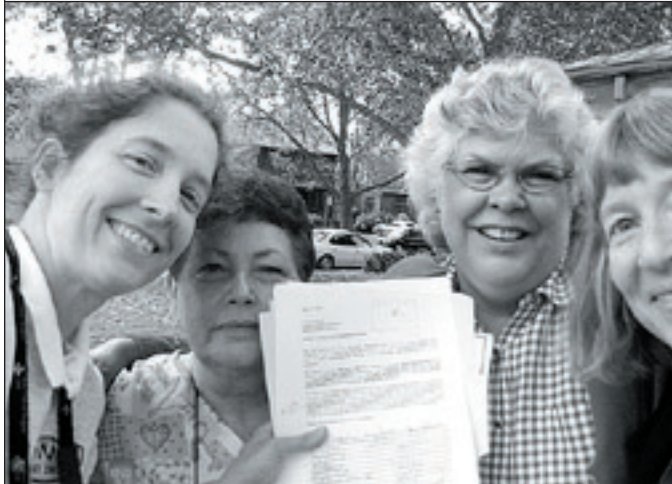
--Ellen Dillinger, MGH

An injury

LVNS FACE CHALLENGE TO NURSING ROLE

There are big changes planned for MGH concerning LVN practice. Suddenly meetings are being conducted on a number of nursing units by supervisors who are initiating a dramatic change in the way LVNs care for patients.

At one such meeting that I attended, I was informed that LVNs would no longer chart any type of nursing assessment; that the only thing to be charted by LVNs are "tasks performed." I was also informed that LVNs could no longer give or take report on their patients. At the end of the shift, this same supervisor was asked by an LVN if she should leave, since her work was completed, and was told to leave to avoid overtime. Since report was still in progress, this same



Patient Care Committee members Lorenza Clausen and Jill Dibert join other shop stewards in presenting a petition for an expedited PCC meeting to address issues.

LVN asked who would answer lights, medicate, and otherwise care for patients. She was informed by the supervisor that the oncoming LVN would leave report as needed to care for the patients on the team. These are the "new" expectations on this unit.

An RN co-worker informed me that there had been a meeting on another unit and that the charge nurse stated that LVNs are now to be "used" as CNAs "that pass pills". This same shift, an LVN from the registry had been assigned in this way. I wonder if she will ever agree to return to MGH to work? In all fairness, this unit does not do team nursing or employ LVNs as regular staff and has always had great difficulty with the LVN role.

According to the VOCATIONAL NURSING PRACTICE ACT (July 1, 2000) under section 2513.5 SCOPE OF NURSING PRACTICE:

The licensed vocational nurse performs services requiring technical and manual skills which include the following:

- a) Uses and practices basic assessment (data collection), participates in planning, executes interventions in accordance with the care plan or treatment plan, and contributes to evaluation of individualized interventions related to the care plan or treatment plan.
- 3) Applies communication skills for the purpose of patient/client care and education.

2518.6 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- a) A licensed vocational nurse shall safeguard patient/client's health and safety by actions which include but are not limited to the following:
 - 2) Documenting patient/client care in accordance with the standards of the profession.

We all know that an LVN works under the direct supervision of the RN. However, when an LVN is told that they cannot chart a basic patient assessment or participate in the education of a patient, this is in direct violation of the LVN's Nursing Practice Act, and under the same act could result in gross negligence on the part of the LVN.

When the hospital arbitrarily redefines our role as LVN, it is a blatant violation of our Union Contract. Our contract states that all such changes **MUST BE BARGAINED WITH OUR UNION!!!** I challenge all LVNs to stand up for the integrity of their nursing practice. If a supervisor/manager holds a meeting to discuss changes such as these, demand that a union representative or shop steward be present. Let this supervisor know that this type of change to our job description requires bargaining with our union. Together we can be strong. We can protect our jobs and our nursing practice.

IN UNITY

Jill Dibert, LVN RSP

PATIENT CARE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Patient Care Committee that was formed last year to resolve patient care issues at Mercy General reached a stumbling block last month. A meeting with CHW had finally been scheduled for May 15th to initiate some movement towards resolving some very major issues at our facility. A lot of effort was put in to contact and organize the six members and one alternate from the bargaining unit members.

After finding a mutually convenient time from the dates provided to us by them, we confirmed the date. Several days before the meeting we were told that we had not confirmed the date in a timely manner and it was no longer available. Furthermore, no date could possibly be scheduled until early June due to the overload of data that was being compiled for SEIU on the proposed budget cuts. When a date for early June was asked for, they were now not available until at least the 23rd of June. This scheduling merry-go-round seems to show that patient care issues and the committee are not a high priority.

As stated in the contract, "the employer will establish a committee comprised of six (6) bargaining unit employees selected by the union and six (6) representatives of the employer selected by the employer".

It also states that "the purpose of this committee is to monitor the quality of patient services and to make recommendations to improve patient services in the context of work design, if applicable, or in the current method or system of patient services delivery".

Stalling the start of the patient care committee shows no emphasis on patient care at all. CHW seems to pat itself on the back, according to the "Mercy Connections" (May 2003) article, by saying individual hospitals in the system have "more say in determining what makes sense to meet the needs of their patients". Michael Erne, Chief Operating Officer for CHW, is also quoted as saying "we're a better organization today because we're putting the emphasis where the work is". Where is the emphasis on patients and staffing? That is where the heart of the organization is.

There are 7 employees, chosen to represent the ideas of the staff at Mercy General. They are concerned about where we are headed. In light of the announced budget cuts that may be needed, it is even more imperative that we meet to discuss how it could affect the care of patients at Mercy General. Failure to implement the committee and allow the opportunity it brings to work toward making our facility a

better place would be a detriment to patients, employees and the community. Other hospitals in the CHW system have implemented their patient care committees. Why can't we?



Lorenza Clausen, MRI tech and PCC member also gets credit for the photo on page 2 "PCC Petition Presentation."

A new meeting date was finally set after several committee members and other employees brought a petition to HR on the morning of the 15th at our originally scheduled meeting time. It stated that this delay is continuing to hinder its progress and that a meeting needs to be scheduled as soon as possible. Our contract is a year old and the fact that it took this long to schedule the first meeting is unacceptable. We will keep you updated on the outcome of this meeting on June 11th.

Lorenza Clausen MGH

BRUCEVILLE TERRACE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

DATE: JUNE 5, 2003
TIME: 3:30pm-6:00pm
LOCATION: MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

METHODIST HOSPITAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

DATE: JUNE 12, 2003
TIME: 07:00am-09:00am 3:30pm-6:00pm
LOCATION: ART THERAPY ROOM

Why should I attend a general membership meeting?

Instead of receiving second hand information from management, talk to field representatives and other shop stewards about your patient care, working conditions, wages or contract concerns.

P.S. Have you heard from administration about CHW's 60 million dollar labor cost reduction plan? Probably not. Attend the general membership meeting and receive this information.

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MERCY SAN JUAN HR DEPARTMENT LOSING BATTLE AS “MODEL FOR ALL CHW HOSPITALS”

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T Show me what this means to you.”

This is not what we are getting at Mercy San Juan Medical Center. At every step and turn of the way our human resource department with the help of a few managers is doing their best to put up road blocks to see that our contract is not honored. But we are not folding one bit, we are only getting stronger and more determined than ever. We will not let them get away with their D-I-S-R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

One of our most important rights under our contract is representation. Our Chief Shop Steward, Sherri Macias, has had a constant struggle to attend grievance meetings, union meetings, and anything to do with her duties as our Chief Steward. She has been threatened with disciplinary actions, put under surveillance, and unfairly treated.

The most recent brilliant idea coming from our human resource department is that our grievances need only one steward to attend. And, they are designating that our

Field Rep be the second representative at all grievances. Our contract states that we have a right and a choice to decide to have two stewards at grievances.

Human resources interpretation of the contract language leaves Sherri unable to attend any grievances at all. What right do they have to decide who our union representation will be at the grievances? We are unable to fairly represent our members to the best of our ability without the ability to choose who attends the grievances. We have always determined who attends the grievances, and our most important representative is our Chief Steward. Once again, our contract is being dishonored, disrespected and manipulated.

It is interesting that Mercy makes allowances for their employees to attend many work related events. Safety Safari, HIPPA training, award ceremonies, staff meetings, employee forums, hospital week barbecue and games. The list goes on. In Sherri’s department, they have relief coverage used for every-

thing but Sherri attending union meetings. Staff are able to go home early, be let go for doctor’s appointments, etc. But when it is time for Sherri to attend a grievance, the answer is “no way.” Something is wrong with this picture and it’s not hard to figure out what it is.

We have a Labor-Management committee whose main theme is collaboration. Our President, Mike Ubaldi, has told us that we as a Union were to be accepted, welcomed and we were to work together with common goals. Our goal would be to make MSJMC a model for all CHW hospitals. These unfair employer actions against us are a barrier to ever making this a success.

The administration and the human resources department need to change their tactics and attitude towards our union. And most importantly our stewards need to be respected and our contract honored.

Susie Boedecker, Shop Steward MSJMC



Sherri Macias is no stranger to adversity. She is shown here (far left) with other members of an informational picket at Woodland Hospital earlier in the year. These Union women’s actions were rewarded last week when Local 250 employees at Woodland Hospital won a contract that gave them parity with other CHW hospitals. Now the next step is enforcing the contract....(see article above).....

to all.

LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO DEBBIE PATTON

To Debbie Patton:

Thank you for all the time and effort you put into the negotiations for the modifications that management was trying to put into effect in the EVS department. Your dedication to this really helped save assignments in our department. Without your energy and dedication, we would not have been able to accomplish this. When it seemed hopeless, you never lost your focus on trying to find a solution.

However, one thing keeps sticking out that you kept saying over and over: "I am not the Union, we are." You said that you were just the shop steward, and that all you do is represent us. I disagree.

You also motivated us. You gave us strength when we began to falter. You gave us motivation. You gave us leadership. You gave us hope. You gave us a lesson in life.

In numbers, there is strength. By having us all become united in this effort, and staying united, we were able to have our voice heard.

By making us aware that we are the union, and not just you, you made us truly a Union. You showed us just how strong we could be if we were not afraid to speak up and be heard. You showed us that you could not do the things you did without us. You showed us that a shop steward is only as strong as the people behind them.

Fellow Union members, take note of this. We cannot sit back and leave everything up to the Shop Steward, for they are only as strong as we are united. Apathy only weakens us. Involvement in the Union strengthens us. Get active and stay active in the Union, for without us there is no Union. That is the lesson Debbie taught the EVS Department, and a lesson everyone should be aware of.

THANK YOU, DEBBIE PATTON!!!!!!!

A Proud Union Member,
Ed Antonoff



Debbie Patton (left front) with co-workers and husband, Ron, behind her. When a job-busting redesign plan appeared on the horizon at MGH, Debbie inspired her co-workers to use the Union contract to bargain for more worker-friendly changes. In April, after six months of bargaining, EVS employees were successful in reaching a favorable settlement agreement with MGH. Photo-Ellen Dillinger

CHW IS FINALLY READY TO TALK

After months of not wanting to talk, CHW is now ready. A meeting was held on May 23rd to discuss CHW's productivity standards. CHW agreed to release all Local 250 Shop Stewards from work so they would be able to attend, at the request of John Borsos (Local 250).



Chris Kurpies, Chief Shop Steward, Methodist Hospital

The Stewards met with John prior to the meeting with CHW. We were informed of a meeting hosted by Michael Erne, (CHW's #2 man) where CHW claimed to have lost 1/2 billion dollars in investments. In the past, CHW made money with investments and lost money on operations. Now we are told they are making money on operations and losing through investments. Another claim was that in the Sacramento area wages, salaries and benefits comprise more than 50% of overall expenses. They also claim they are 6 million over budget.

During our meeting with CHW, we were given a handout by CHW that showed that operating costs are actually under budget. CHW also proposed a plan for consideration to compare our staffing to the best practices in other CHW hospitals. My opinion is all hospitals are different and have different needs.

Another problem is CHW hasn't released any of the information requested by the Union. A second request was presented and CHW agreed to provide the information.

John Borsos asked if Department Managers have

put together plans for changes in their departments. Management

present at this meeting reported that some have and some haven't. We requested that information, too.

I wonder how long managers have been working on their plans. A lot of cynicism was expressed about CHW's intentions, given CHW's history of not wanting to cooperate and work together.

In order to move forward, the Union

wants all changes that have not been bargained to be undone. If any changes have been made in your department, let a Shop Steward know immediately!

The next meeting is set for June 23rd at 2:00. All Shop Stewards must inform their managers that they are to be released to attend this meeting. If your manager gives you any problems advise them to call the H.R. Director at your Hospital. If CHW works with us, I hope we can make forward progress together.

--Chris Kurpies, METH



John Borsos explaining the Union's position to CHW management across the table. Shop Stewards from the MHS hospitals described changes made without bargaining in their departments.

PEACE IS NOT MERELY A DISTANT GOAL THAT WE SEEK, BUT A MEANS BY WHICH WE ARRIVE AT THAT GOAL." Martin Luther King, Jr.

What's it all about? If this is really about "productivity standards" think how productive we would all be if our grievances were promptly addressed and we were back at work doing our jobs! What will it

take for CHW to understand and act on the idea that employees need to be part of the decisions that affect their work? This is the time to establish a way for the Union and CHW to work within

the contract that both have signed. The quality of the actions we take now will determine the quality of the final result. It's up to all of us.
--E. Dillinger, MGH

safety



ASK JOSIE:

1) According to the contract between CHW and SEIU Local 250, the Patient Care Committee addresses what issues?

- a) Incentive pay (bonuses) for Management
- b) Staffing issues
- c) Structural changes in delivery of patient services
- d. Work changes

ANSWER: b, c, d

2) In what year was the stethoscope invented? a) 1858 b) 1935 c) 1910
d) 1816

ANSWER: d

3) Twenty-eight day schedules of starting and quitting times and days off will be posted no less than _____ days in advance of the schedule.

- a) 20 days
- b) 15 days
- c) 14 days
- d) 13 days

ANSWER: d

4) Do labor mediators and arbitrators have the same function and responsibilities?

ANSWER: No. Though both are a third party, an arbitrator renders decisions (awards) pertaining to grievances, while a mediator tries to persuade management and the union to come to a voluntary agreement.

5) When a vacancy occurs in a department must management post the position?

- a) Management has the final decision on whether to post the position.
- b) If management is able to spread the workload among the remaining employees and accomplish the goal with fewer employees and reduce budget cost the answer is "NO".
- c) If management is able to subcontract the vacancy position and able to accomplish the goals of reducing the budget the answer is "NO".
- d) YES.

ANSWER: d According to the contract between CHW and SEIU Local 250, "When a vacancy occurs in any department, a notice of that vacancy shall be posted in a location or locations accessible to all employees for a minimum period of seven (7) days before the Employer fills the vacancy on a permanent basis." Members of SEIU Local 250, remember it is your responsibility to make sure that when a vacancy occurs in your department, check that the job is posted. If you fail to enforce the contract, you might see yourself with an increase in workload.

6) In what year did death certificates come into general use in the United States?

- a) 1842
- b) 1859
- c) 1902
- d) 1915

ANSWER: d 1915

LAST MONTH'S CONTEST WINNER!

Union Talks photographer Dick Wood answered every question correctly on May's "Ask Josie" Union quiz. His fabulous prize: he gets to continue photographing exciting Union events and personalities. Congratulations, Dick!
Photo-Josie Summers



WE NEED MORE SHOP STEWARDS!

CHIEF SHOP STEWARDS

MGH: TBA
Home:
Work:
METH: Chris Kurpies

Work: 423-6176
Bruceville Terrace:
Christine Thomas
684-9265
MSJH: Sherri Macias
Home: 971-0654
Work: 537-5037
Woodland Clinic:
Lydia Bone
(On union leave.
Refer to union
bulletin board for
stewards' phone
numbers.)

SEIU Local 250 Field Representatives:

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

STEWARDS 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



U.S. HEALTH CARE VERSUS THE WORLD

Researchers at John Hopkins School of Public Health have found that Americans receive lower levels of health care service than most other developed countries, despite the fact that health care costs in the United States lead the world. The study found that patients in the United States spend less time with doctors and in hospitals than in other countries. U.S. health care costs averaged \$4,631 per person in 2000---44% higher than Swiss residents, the second biggest spenders on health care.

--From "NewsWatch" in LABOR NOTES

action