



Setting New Standards

SEIU 121RN Members at CHW Hospitals Northridge and St Johns Win Wage Increases in Excess of 31% over the next 4 years

Working into the wee hours of the morning, the CHW bargaining team settled a ground-breaking contract on October 21, 2008. Standing united, we won significant pay increases and improvements at work AND we helped set the stage for our brothers and sisters in Las Vegas who settled their contract just a few days later.

Throughout the 12 month campaign, CHW workers came together like never before, electing broad representative bargaining committees, moving bargaining surveys through all the units in the hospital, holding meetings with workers at St Johns Pleasant Valley and St Johns Regional Medical Center and Northridge and holding two informational pickets. Hundreds of people participated in informational pickets at CHW hospitals, enduring 100+ degree weather. CHW nurses were joined by union members from SEIU and other California Unions, community members, political leaders and friends and family in an overwhelming show of support for our campaign to improve our hospitals.

CHW Nurses were ready to do what ever it took to win improvements for themselves and their patients—in the end more than 90% of CHW workers voted yes to strike.

(continued on page 4)

Here's What We Won

- **Average increases of 31%, with some getting a maximum increase of 46% over four years.**
- **Immediate 5.25% retroactive to May 1, 2008.**
- **Beginning May 1, 2009 all nurses at Northridge and St. John's will move to a common wage scale.**
- **The new wage scale, and nurse wages, grows 2 times per year in 2009 and 2010 and once in 2011 with guaranteed minimum increases of at least 4% per year and maximums of 10%.**
- **The addition of 2 more "longevity steps" to the wage scales for experienced nurses. In May 2009 a 4% 18 year step will be added and in May 2011 a 4% 22 year step will be added.**



SEIU Members In Political Action

SEIU members from across the country made their voices heard in the 2008 elections in record numbers. We did our part to ensure that the Presidential candidates stood up for workers by signing petitions calling on members to support the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

According to SEIU 121 RN President Gayle Batiste, "We gathered thousands of postcards in just a few weeks." Here in California and across the country, we mounted

a campaign long before election day to force politicians to take a stand on issues that are important to workers. We invited candidates to "Walk a Day in Our Shoes" which had candidates following nurses and other workers through a typical day at work in our hospitals and worksites. And, our fellow SEIU members in Las Vegas hosted a healthcare forum where candidates for President stood before voters and delivered their plans for reforming healthcare.



**A New President
A New Congress
A New Statehouse**

*Continuing to Make
Our Voices Heard*



Political action doesn't stop when elections are over. SEIU members are spending the first 260 days of President-elect Barack Obama's Administration

working hard to ensure the passage of meaningful healthcare reform and the Employee Free Choice Act. Two SEIU Local 121 RN members will be coming off the job to work on these priorities. "I am excited to be coming off the job to talk to SEIU 121 members about EFCA, says Jim Owen. "We know how important it is for workers to have a voice at work, so we will be able to send a strong message to President-elect Obama and Congress that the time is now to pass this legislation." Here in California, we will be working to strengthen staffing ratios, reduce the incidence of infections acquired in hospitals and other healthcare settings and address workplace violence.

SEIU's Political Agenda for 2009

■ **The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) will make it easier for workers to join a union in their workplace. The legislation would give workers a fair and direct path to form unions through majority**

sign-up, help employees secure a contract with their employer in a reasonable period of time, and toughen penalties against employers who violate their workers' rights.

■ **California's fiscal situation has been described as "truly awful" by Legislative Analysts. SEIU members will be working to ensure that our state budget meets the needs of seniors, children, families, and people with disabilities.**

■ **We will continue our work on healthcare reform that fixes a broken system that undermines the economic security of our families, limits the productivity of our workforce, stagnates job creation and wage growth and threatens to crowd out investments in energy, education and infrastructure**

■ **Our California Nursing agenda includes initiatives to: improve on the staffing law; enact safe lifting standards modeled after Washington law; improve on legislation to reduce the incidence of infections acquired in hospitals and other healthcare settings; promote legislation that will address workplace violence.**

Resources for the Professional Nurse

HEALTHCARE AND NURSE PRACTICE POLICY UPDATES

Pennsylvania Nurses Win Legislation Banning Mandatory Overtime: It's been seven years in the making, but Pennsylvania has passed state legislation banning mandatory overtime for nurses and healthcare workers. www.seiu.org/2008/10/pennsylvania-rns-win-mandatory-overtime-ban.php



California Passes Legislation to Reduce Hospital-Acquired Infections:

This year the California Legislature passed legislation to establish the Medical Facility Infection Control and Prevention Act (Act), which requires hospitals to implement specified procedures for screening, prevention, and reporting specified health care associated infections also known as hospital associated infections (HAIs). They've also passed legislation which establishes an infection surveillance, prevention, and control program within the Department of Public Health to provide oversight of hospital prevention and reporting of general acute care hospital-associated infections, expands the responsibilities of the existing Healthcare Associated Infection Advisory Committee, and requires all hospitals to institute a patient safety plan for the purpose of improving the health and safety of patients and reducing preventable patient safety events.



ISSUE BRIEFINGS

The Joint Commission Issues Alert Against Nurse Harassment: The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Organizations, the organization that monitors the quality of hospitals and other healthcare facilities, has issued an alert that includes recommendations for employers to address workplace harassment by physicians and coworkers. www.jointcommission.org/SentinelEvents/SentinelEventAlert/sea_40.htm

Twenty-Eight Groups Work Together to Transform Quality, Safety of Health Care in 2009 and Beyond: A diverse group of national organizations recently released an action agenda that calls for group members to work collaboratively and with others to transform health care by fundamentally improving patient care and outcomes. The National Priorities Partnership, convened by the National Quality Forum and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has developed six areas to target reform in ways that will eliminate waste, harm and disparities. www.rwjf.org/qualityequality/product.jsp?id=33971&c=EMC-CA142



Continuing Education Offerings—2009 Courses

SEIU Joint Employer Education Fund (must be employed at a CHW facility or Moreno Valley Community Hospital)

Hemodynamic Monitoring

1/14/09, 8:00am-4:30pm

Los Angeles, application deadline 12/17/08

Cardiovascular Pharmacology

3/5/09, 8:00am-4:30pm

Los Angeles, application deadline 2/4/09

Crashing Kids:

Pediatric Medical Emergencies

2/28/09, 8:00am-5:00pm

Los Angeles, application deadline 1/22/09

Bioterrorism

5/5/09, 8:00am-4:30pm

San Fernando Valley,
 application deadline 4/8/09

For more info call: 1-800-872-4606

Look for more CEU Offerings from SEIU Local 121RN in the coming New Year

Join Our Staffing Ratios Research Team!

SEIU Nurses Have to Make the Staffing Law Work. It's Up to Us

After helping pass the law, SEIU nurses in the Nurse Alliance began to work on implementing it, including providing our professional recommendations to DHS on the implementation regulations.

But there's more work to do. Initial reports from the field indicate that there are a number of problems with the staffing ratios law that may need to be addressed, including:

- **Basic adherence to the staffing ratios.**

- **Non-nurse support staff being cut, forcing nurses to pick up the slack, thus undermining the law's intent.**

- **Problems with patient classification systems, resulting in inadequate staffing levels.**

Recent research by the California Nursing Outcomes Coalition also supports the need to look more deeply at how/if the law has been implemented.

Join our research project—and the campaign to make staffing ratios work for patients.

Contact: Donalda Dunnett at (818) 284-6761

Setting New Standards

(continued from front page)

Standing united, we won a standard setting contract with improvements in staffing and patient care and with more than 31% pay increases for nurses.

"This contract is a win-win for everybody. CHW retains their expert staff, we as staff feel more recognized and appreciated. And, patient care can only improve because of the mechanisms we built in our contract to tackle acuity."

—**Adriane Carrier, RN**, St John's Regional Medical Center in Telemtry 2North

"In today's economy it has become even more essential to attract and retain the best nurses to our hospitals. This new contract will help us to accomplish that. We also negotiated language that will allow us to collaborate with administration on our acuity system so we can ensure that our patients receive the best possible care."

—**Marilou Weiss, RN**, Northridge postpartum



Our Brothers and Sisters at CHW in Las Vegas Set New Standards for Nevada Nurses

- **Huge wage increases of up to 38.2% over four years; up to 20.1% in first year alone.**

- **Immediate 5% wage increases retroactive to July 1, 2008.**

- **Strongest staffing protections outside of California including improvements to their existing ratios. Their staffing levels will move to 1:5 in Med-Surg and 1:5 in OSU to match California law.**

- **A quality POS healthcare option with up to a \$3400 decrease in premiums. Premiums are frozen until re-opener in May 2009.**

LOCAL 121RN
RN news 