

Q&A

Questions & Answers About a Strike Vote at Dignity Hospitals



Why are we voting on a strike authorization?

After months of bad faith bargaining and other unfair labor practices, management is threatening our job security by proposing to subcontract our jobs, freeze our wages, and cut our health and retirement benefits.

What does a strike authorization vote mean?

We will vote to authorize our Bargaining Team to call an Unfair Labor Practice strike if Dignity continues to bargain in bad faith.

What happens after the vote?

After members authorize a strike, our Bargaining Team -- made up of RN Union members from Northridge Hospital Medical Center, St. John's Regional Medical Center, and St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital -- will determine if and when to give management a 10-day notice and call a strike.

Does this mean we will go on strike?

We hope we won't have to, but we must be prepared to go on strike if our Bargaining Team calls one. We have tried for months to negotiate a fair contract with management, but they continue to bargain in bad faith and commit Unfair Labor Practices. We must be prepared to show management that we are united and serious about obtaining a fair contract. A strike is a last resort but we need to be prepared to stand together to not only protest the Unfair Labor Practices, but also to win a fair contract.

Do I have to strike?

No, but your participation makes a difference. If you do not participate in the strike, you are sending a clear message to management that you will accept whatever they offer in a contract, including all the take-aways. If everyone participates, management will understand much earlier how important a fair contract is to all RNs.

How much notice will we have before a strike?

By law, our Bargaining Team must give management at least 10 days notice of any strike so all members will also be notified 10 days ahead of a strike.

How long would we strike? Would all hospitals strike the same days?

Our strike would be a defined length of time and not open-ended like some past strikes by grocery and entertainment unions. To make the biggest impact and show management we are serious about obtaining a fair contract, RNs at all three hospitals would go on strike on the same days.

Can management ask us how we are voting and if we plan to strike?

While management may have the right to ask you how you plan to vote or if you plan to strike, you do **not** have to answer. Your vote and whether you will strike are your business and you do not have to share your intentions with anyone, including management.

What is a lockout?

A lockout is the employer's counterpart to a strike. In a lockout, the employer prevents employees from working in an effort to gain a better bargaining position in labor negotiations. Some workers may be eligible for unemployment benefits in the event of a lockout.

Can we be locked out by management after our strike?

Yes. Our Union's goal is to negotiate a fair contract with management and not have to strike. But we must be prepared in case management continues to bargain in bad faith in an effort to deny us a fair contract. Management can lock us out but replacement RNs are extremely costly to management so they would likely only lock us out for the duration of any contract with the company that provides the replacement RNs.

Will my patients be taken care of? Is a strike considered abandonment of my patients?

The law requires that we give the hospital 10 days notice before we strike. This will give the hospital ample time to hire temporary RNs or transfer patients to other facilities. Transferring patients and hiring replacement nurses are both very expensive. A strike is a protected Union activity and does **not** constitute abandonment of our patients due to the notice the hospital will be given.

Can I be fired for going on strike?

No. The National Labor Relations Act recognizes and protects the right to strike by Union healthcare workers.

Are probationary RNs expected to strike?

Even though federal law protects all striking workers, because probationary employees can be let go with no explanation required, we do not recommend that probationary employees or Versant residents go on strike.

Management claims that a strike won't make a difference in our contract. Is this true?

No. Dignity and its managers would not be spending so much time and energy to discourage a strike if it was "no big deal." Managers have to take over employees' work during a strike, a strike hurts the hospital's reputation in the community, and the hospital loses revenue if physicians send patients to other hospitals or perform surgeries at other facilities. It takes millions of dollars to hire temporary workers and many weeks or months for the hospital to recover from a worker strike.

Will I be paid by my employer when I am on strike?

No. However, you will receive a paycheck from the hospital for any hours worked before or after the strike when paychecks are normally received.

Will I need to call the nursing office on days we're on strike?

No. As a healthcare facility, our Union is required by law to give 10 days notice of when we will go on strike to the hospital.

Will night shift workers be walking the picket line at night?

Due to safety concerns, night shift workers will not picket at night. Night shift workers will, however, be expected to be on the picket line during daytime hours.



If you have questions about the strike authorization vote or a strike that are not addressed here, please contact a Bargaining Team member:

St. John's

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Northridge

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