

4,000 health care workers in San Francisco launch one-day strike

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Four thousand health care workers walked off the job Thursday against 10 for-profit hospitals in California's San Francisco Bay Area. The one-day strike was to protest the wave of budget cutbacks that have degraded medical care.

The strikers included licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, janitors, clerical staff, respiratory therapists and food service workers, all members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 250. Throughout the day, the strikers were joined on the picket line by registered nurses, many of whom refused to cross the lines.

Workers report that as Bay Area hospitals have come under the control of medical for-profit corporations, the resulting staff cuts have compromised patient care. SEIU officials are also pressing for greater input in future management decisions on staffing and other operational matters.

The struck hospitals included Seton Medical Center, Daly City; Children's Hospital and Summit Medical Center, both in Oakland; Alta Bates Medical Center in Berkeley; and Alameda Hospital in Alameda. Also affected were St. Mary's Hospital and St. Francis Medical Center in San Francisco, Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, Sutter Hospital Lakeside in Lakeport and Sutter Solano Hospital in Vallejo.

The one-day strike came as a month-long strike by 1,730 nurses continued at Stanford Medical Center and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. The nurses' are demanding a 16 percent increase in pay and benefits.



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