

Diary of a striking Stanford nurse: Why is the union not providing any updates about the strike?

A Stanford nurse on strike
28 April 2022

The WSWS will be publishing the strike diary of a nurse who wishes to remain anonymous for purposes of job security. Are you a Stanford nurse? Contact us and tell us how the strike is impacting you. We respect anonymity.

Day 4

The mood on the picket line today is still enthusiastic and optimistic. Nurses are gathered with coworkers, blasting music and cheering as cars pass, honking in support. A group of resident physicians joins the picket. Techs, nursing assistants and transport workers are out with us before their own shifts. There is a feeling that we are strongly supported by other workers in the hospital.

There's a crucial question circulating among us. It comes up in even the briefest conversations with coworkers. Why haven't we heard anything from the union?

The email updates from CRONA (Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement) give us no information. The most recent email clearly indicates that nurses have been pushing to find out what is going on. In response, CRONA explains that they are in federal mediation and writes, "When the parties are in mediation, there will not be detailed updates. Your CRONA team will of course let you know if there is anything to report."

This is a big red flag. Nurses are not passive people. We call crisis nurses when our patients are declining, we question orders from physicians, we get MRI or CT on the phone to organize the timing of our patients' scans. We are constantly coordinating, constantly active, moving and fighting. The same must be done now.

We need ways to figure out what is going on and share information among ourselves. If the union isn't telling us anything, that means nothing good is happening. If they were winning at the negotiating table, they would have every reason to tell us.

We need our own networks to make sure all nurses know what is going on in the strike at all times. If CRONA isn't going to tell us anything, we need to have a way to figure it out ourselves so we are all on the same page. Get your coworkers' phone numbers on the picket lines, connect on social media, start Facebook pages so we can all start talking together about what is going on, what we want in this fight and how we plan to get it.

Nurses at many other hospitals across California have contracts expiring or are already on strike. Did you work at a Sutter hospital before Stanford? Do you know a Kaiser nurse from nursing school? Did an old coworker move to SoCal and now works for Cedars-Sinai? Is there a travel nurse on your unit who works at hospitals across the state? Get in touch with them, tell them there is no reason for us to strike separately when we would all benefit by striking together.

Hospital administrators and their investors across all nearby hospital systems are no doubt working together to keep our struggles separate. They will continue to spend tremendous resources to beat us back, isolate us and wear us down. They are cutting off our health care in two days. They are putting up scab nurses in nice San Francisco hotels.

How can we win a strike if we are isolated and kept in the dark? Nurses, let's do what we do best and rely on each other. Let's share information and connect with each other and our co-workers across the state.

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