# SEIU international intervenes to impose contract on Muskegon nurses

**Esther Galen**
**2 May 2022**

*Do you work at Trinity Health Mercy in Muskegon? We want to hear from you: Tell us about the conditions at the hospital and what you think about the nurses' contract. Comments will be published anonymously.*

On Friday, April 29, nurses and support workers at Trinity Health Mercy in Muskegon, SEIU Healthcare Michigan, read the first contract update on the union's website since February. In it, the international union announced that it had taken control of the local under a trusteeship order on April 27, and immediately reached a tentative contact for registered nurses.

Voting is to take place on Tuesday, May 3, while negotiations are continuing for technicians, service and support staff.

The intervention by the international raises a number of important questions for nurses and support workers.

Are workers really to believe that after they worked without a contract for several years, because of Trinity Health Mercy's absolute intransigence on all issues, that two days after the International took over, the hospital suddenly buckled and gave nurses a good contract?

Whatever the sins of the local leadership, the intervention of the international union stinks of a sell-out, imposed after a deal with management behind closed doors.

What is the rush to force nurses to vote on a contract they haven't had time to study and many haven't even seen? Will the pay raises make up for inflation? What's happening with incentives? Will mandatory overtime end? Will more staff be hired to achieve safe nurse-patient ratios?

Highlights are not enough, and usually conceal more than they illuminate.

Why, after months in which workers at the hospital have been looking forward to a united fight for better wages and conditions, is the international union breaking that unity? They are separating the nurses from support and technical workers, instead of presenting the contracts when they've all been negotiated so they can all be discussed together. Trinity management proceeds as a single unit. The staff has to use its maximum united strength too.

According to the trusteeship order, the international union seized control of the local because of "substantial allegations of serious financial malpractice … a breakdown in democratic procedures in the Local. ... Further there are significant and persistent problems with the Local's membership list."

The order even claims, "for the foreseeable future, the Local will be unable to produce an accurate membership list and conduct its elections."

How then can the international union even conduct a vote on the contract? Who will decide who gets to vote? Who will count the votes, where and when?

Nurses at Trinity Health Mercy, and their staff co-workers, have powerful allies. All over the United States and internationally, nurses and other health care workers have been moving into struggles driven by the COVID pandemic, budget cuts in the health care system and the profit drive of the employers.

What is necessary is to reach out to these allies, not to local and state Democratic Party politicians, as union officials, both local and national, advocate.

Nurses should not be rushed into a rotten deal.

The WSWS urges the following course of action:

? Vote No and demand to see the whole contract, with meetings scheduled to discuss it in detail before any future vote.

? Demand a substantial, above-inflation wage increase, and an end to forced overtime and understaffing.

© World Socialist Web Site

? Establish a rank-and-file committee to organize the struggle and make sure you don't get steamrolled by the international.

For more information about the struggles of health care workers and for assistance in setting up a rank-and-file committee, contact us here.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**wsws.org/contact**

© World Socialist Web Site