

ICE detains immigrant in operation inside Riverside Community Hospital in Southern California

Marc Wells
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On June 21, 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents reportedly entered the premises of Riverside Community Hospital (RCH) in Southern California and detained at least one individual. It is unclear at the time of this writing whether the person was a patient, brought in for treatment, or detained while visiting the hospital. That the event took place was confirmed by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Social media reports suggest that the nurse who attended to the detainee has also been taken by ICE, placed on administrative leave without pay and now faces possible termination. Hospital management is reportedly disciplining staff members who refuse to cooperate with ICE.

Posts from healthcare workers on Reddit's r/InlandEmpire community, including one dated June 11, foreshadowed the incident, warning of "ICE at Riverside Community Hospital" and reporting two ICE vehicles on-site around 10 days prior. These chilling reports paint a picture of collaboration between federal agents and hospital management that cannot be interpreted as anything less than a grotesque betrayal of both legal and medical ethics.

When contacted by this reporter, Riverside Community Hospital issued the following statement:

Due to patient privacy laws, we cannot confirm or deny any specific interactions; however, Riverside Community Hospital is obligated to comply with all applicable federal laws in our interactions with government entities.

This non-response is a cover for collaboration with federal immigration agents and a flagrant betrayal of medical ethics. Compliance with "all applicable laws" means collaborating with the lawless rampaging of Trump's immigration Gestapo.

This operation is part of a sweeping crackdown launched across Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire during June 2025. Military-style raids by ICE agents have been documented in Big Bear, Pomona, Corona, Inglewood, Torrance, Downey, Hollywood, Paramount and now Riverside. These blitzes are characterized by sudden, unannounced workplace incursions and roadside detentions, terrorizing immigrant workers and their communities.

On June 13, approximately 300 protesters gathered in downtown Riverside, just two days after social media posts first warned of ICE's presence. Demonstrations on June 14 by millions across the United States reflected a growing recognition that these raids are part of a far broader assault on democratic rights and on the social position of the working class as a whole.

The latest hospital incursion comes months after the Trump administration rescinded the Biden-era "sensitive locations" policy, which had offered a certain limited buffer against immigration enforcement in hospitals, schools and religious institutions. Even this protection was riddled with loopholes—chief among them the "exigent circumstances" clause crafted under Obama and retained by Biden which ICE has now weaponized to claim carte blanche authority to raid medical facilities.

In January 2025, the Trump administration issued an "unreleased directive," followed by a January 31 memo granting ICE agents broad discretion to act in spaces

previously designated as “Protected Areas.” Now, hospitals like RCH have become open hunting grounds, with undocumented patients forced to weigh the risk of detention against the need for medical treatment.

That Riverside Community Hospital would play host to such a disgraceful operation comes as no surprise. The facility is owned by HCA Healthcare, a for-profit conglomerate that operates hospitals and clinics across the US and UK. HCA has an extensive record of fraudulent billing, upcoding, surprise medical bills and legal settlements reaching into the hundreds of millions.

More recently, HCA has developed artificial intelligence tools and algorithms to maximize profits, not outcomes, deciding when and how patients should be discharged. In this context, the collaboration between HCA and ICE flows naturally from the capitalist healthcare system in which healthcare is not a social right but a commodity and where workers, especially immigrants, are treated as disposable.

The use of hospitals as staging grounds for immigration arrests is a dangerous escalation, designed to isolate and intimidate the most vulnerable members of the working class. It has created a dangerous and inhumane climate described as the “chilling effect.” Workers suffering from chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure are avoiding care out of fear that their visit to a clinic could be their last moment of freedom.

Social media is now flooded with warnings about ICE presence near healthcare facilities. Clinics in working class and immigrant neighborhoods report days without a single patient, after alerts of ICE raids. These no-show days result not only in worse—if not disastrous—medical outcomes for patients but in systemic breakdowns: emergency rooms flooded with preventable complications, skyrocketing healthcare costs and overworked staff.

The Trump administration, enabled by the cowardly silence of the Democrats, has crafted a brutal policy of attrition: to make life so unbearable for undocumented workers that they either self-deport or disappear into the shadows. What is unfolding is a coordinated assault on democratic rights at home through authoritarianism and militarized repression. Abroad, this domestic war on the working class is mirrored by the catastrophic consequences of US imperialism: the ongoing genocide

in Gaza now joined by a criminal US-Israeli attack on Iran, threatening to ignite a world war.

The Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* call on workers across the healthcare sector and beyond to take a stand. Form independent rank-and-file committees in every hospital and clinic to oppose ICE collaboration and take action to defend patients and colleagues under attack.

This is a class issue, not simply a legal one. The same system that punishes nurses for helping their patients also forces warehouse workers to labor under unbearable conditions, pays starvation wages and sends young people to fight and die in imperialist wars. Only through a unified, socialist movement of the international working class can these horrors be stopped.



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