

As Henry Ford Genesys nurses complete third month on strike, management steps up strikebreaking

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As 800 nurses at Henry Ford Health Genesys hospital in Grand Blanc, Michigan, near completion or their third month on the picket line fighting for enforceable, safe staffing standards, they are facing ramped up strikebreaking by the multibillion-dollar health conglomerate.

According to local union officials, Henry Ford Health has not moved on the question of mandatory nurse-to-patient ratios since day one of the strike. In the meantime, Henry Ford has implemented the terms of its final contract, including a below-inflation 8.6 percent net pay increase, in an effort to encourage strikers to break ranks and return to work. This is under conditions where Genesys nurses earn lower pay than nurses at many area hospitals, and management is paying strikebreaking nurses \$100 an hour.

Teamsters Local 332 has filed unfair labor practice charges over management's attempt to unilaterally impose its contract offer using the bogus pretense of an impasse.

Henry Ford Health acquired the operations of what was Grand Blanc Genesys Hospital in the fall of 2024 through a joint venture with Ascension Michigan. Since that time, conditions at Genesys have deteriorated as management has sought to recoup the costs of the acquisition off the backs of staff and at the expense of patient care.

The great danger is that the strike continues to remain isolated under conditions where Henry Ford Health is continuing normal operations at scores of hospitals, medical centers and clinics across Southeast Michigan. Henry Ford Genesys is one of the few unionized hospitals in the Henry Ford Health system, which reported \$9.6 billion in revenues in 2024.

Some 370 hospital support staff, members of American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3518, have continued to work under a separate contract during the strike.

About 375 nurses at Henry Ford Rochester Hospital were locked out five days in June of 2025 after they returned an 87 percent vote to strike for three days. The nurses at Henry Ford Rochester are also fighting for safe staffing and have been without a contract since 2022.

While healthcare workers all across the United States have launched strikes and protests against ruthless cost-cutting by the healthcare conglomerates, their struggles have been rendered ineffective by the trade union apparatuses. In most cases, walkouts have been limited to a few days. In the few instances where open-ended strikes have been launched, such as at Genesys, healthcare workers have been left isolated so that the billion-dollar hospital chains can wear them down and impose defeats. This was the case at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, where workers struck for 301 days in 2021 over staffing before finally being forced to ratify a concessionary contract.

Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman visited the picket line last month. Despite tough sounding talk, O'Brien proposed no concrete action to aid or expand the strike.

O'Brien notoriously was invited to speak at the Republican National Convention in 2024, receiving applause from the collective assembly of extreme right-wing and anti-working class politicians.

While elected as a supposed reformer, he showed his true colors with the betrayal the 2023 UPS contract

struggle covering 340,000 workers. The Teamsters used a bogus “strike-ready” campaign to strike a militant posture but then blocked a strike and pushed through a contract that met none of drivers’ key demands, especially those regarding casual workers. Since then, tens of thousands of UPS workers have lost their jobs due to automation and other measures.

Instead of seeking to expand the struggle and mobilize support behind the Genesys nurses, the Teamsters leadership has sought to whip up animosity toward *World Socialist Web Site* reporters. On the picket line, Teamsters bureaucrats have discouraged strikers from engaging in conversation with the WSWS, falsely branding it as “anti-union.”

Despite this, several Genesys workers stopped to discuss the issues in their strike with the WSWS.

One veteran nurse told the WSWS, “A lot of people will never cross. They will go find work elsewhere with employers who are ethical and don’t lie to people.”

She was outraged by the reports that the Trump administration’s Department of Education is proposing to take away the professional status of nurses, teachers and other occupations through changes to federal student loan regulations. This will make it harder for those entering nursing to get student loans, further discouraging entry into a field that, along with teaching, is already facing severe shortages.

She explained, “We are a profession. We have our own licensure. There is a national and worldwide nurse shortage. You need programs to finance and get people into nursing because it is a very difficult profession. We love what we do. It’s not the money or the hours—they suck. It’s not the holidays, weekends and night shifts. Who wants to go in there to hold dead people’s hands? I want to work somewhere I am valued.

“To say it is not a profession, you are not getting an equal amount for loans, is going to make bigger problems. It is going to make it more difficult to get people into the profession. We are one of the few professions AI can’t replace. Someone has to actually be there.”

Referring to cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, she said, “It doesn’t make them not sick. It means they can’t pay for their care. They still have to come. We still have to take care of them, but the reimbursement is not there. It means people wait longer

to come in for treatment, and when they come in, they are sicker.”

On the strikebreaking operation being carried out by Henry Ford, another nurse said, “They paid more for temporary workers the first week than what they offered in their whole contract over three years.” Another nurse said Henry Ford paid \$6 million the first week of the strike alone on strikebreakers.

She added, “They don’t have unions at their other hospitals, and they don’t want us to get a good contract.”

The WSWS explained the call for the building of rank-and-file committees to take up the fight to mobilize workers independent of the trade union bureaucracy. We explained that our opposition to the Teamsters leadership was not “anti-union,” pointing to the fact that O’Brien and other bureaucrats like United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain carried out policies detrimental to the interests of workers they claim to represent, by imposing company-friendly contracts to suppressing strike action.

WSWS reporters also spoke to striking workers about the ongoing investigation by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) into the death of Stellantis Dundee Engine worker Ronald Adams Sr. The UAW, working with management and Michigan’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), is currently engaged in a cover-up of the conditions that led to his death this past April.

One nurse, who had previously worked at an area auto plant, said she was shocked to hear that Adams may have been working alone. She said she was familiar with lockout procedures. “There is supposed to be a lockout. I worked at GM. I never ever saw skilled trades work by themselves. They travel in pairs.”

She added, “We are all replaceable.” She agreed that workers have the right to a safe workplace. “The problem is everything is getting out of balance.”



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