

# Trump's NLRB rules against Henry Ford Genesys Hospital nurses as strike enters 8th month

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The strike by 700 nurses and case workers at Henry Ford Genesys Hospital in Grand Blanc, Michigan is now in its eighth month. The walkout, which started on Labor Day weekend 2025, has emerged as a symbol of the bitter conflict between dedicated hospital employees across the country and the intransigence of the massive hospital and health care chains that are focused on increasing profits and the multi-million-dollar salaries of their executives.

At the same time, the strike has revealed the growing conflict between rank-and-file workers and the apparatus of the unions, which in this case is the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Over the past seven-plus months, the Teamsters bureaucracy has kept the struggle of the Genesys strikers isolated and left them to fight on their own.

Even though nurses at every hospital—as well as workers in all industries in Michigan and beyond—are facing the exact same battle against understaffing, insufficient compensation in the face of the rising cost of living and attacks on their right to strike, not one section of healthcare workers at Genesys or any other hospital in Michigan has been called out on strike in support of Teamsters Local 332 to help win their basic demands.

From the beginning, the central issue at Genesys Hospital has been safe staffing ratios, the indispensable question bound up with the daily safety of patients and the working conditions of the staff who care for them. The workers struck on September 1, 2025, after contract negotiations collapsed over staffing, pay and related conditions.

By late October, the strike had already entered its eighth week, and Henry Ford was relying on scab nurses, paying more than \$100 an hour to keep the hospital running while the company's management publicly praised workers who crossed the line and returned to work individually. By November, the company had escalated further, imposing its final contract terms unilaterally, including a below-inflation net wage increase.

In December, the corporation threatened to permanently replace the strikers altogether, showing that its answer to the staffing crisis is not to resolve it, but to break the resistance of those who fight against it.

The determination of the nurses and case workers has been remarkable. They have remained on the picket line despite intimidation, financial strain, court action against their

encampments, and repeated efforts to normalize strikebreaking as a matter of “business.”

When Henry Ford sought court injunctions to remove tents, chairs and other picket-line infrastructure, the Teamsters did not mobilize broader power to defeat the attack. The union bureaucracy accommodated it. This underscored a central issue in the struggle: the workers have shown courage and persistence, but the union apparatus has functioned as a barrier to the fight.

The recent dismissal by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) of one of more than a dozen unfair labor practice complaints filed by the union points both to the diversionary strategy of the Teamsters leadership and the political nature of the strike itself. On October 6, 2025, the Teamsters filed an NLRB complaint that Henry Ford failed to provide health benefit information to the union in a timely manner.

As was entirely predictable, the NLRB ruled that the hospital made good-faith efforts to accommodate the union's requests, including offering alternatives and proposing a confidentiality agreement regarding sensitive data.

The response of the Teamsters to the ruling was also predicable. Union officials released a statement saying they were disappointed, and then told the workers to hope the rest of their unfair labor practice charges against Henry Ford “over their numerous illegal practices” would end in a ruling that favored the strikers.

The Trump administration has reorganized the leadership of the NLRB to even more thoroughly align it with the interests of the corporations. In March 2026, Trump appointed James R. Murphy as chairman of the NLRB. The elevation of Murphy, a Republican Party official who has been on the board for many decades, is part of the conversion of all government institutions into direct and open instruments of the financial oligarchy to attack the working class and basic democratic rights.

Another diversionary campaign organized by Teamsters officials was a protest at the Michigan State Capitol on March 17 to promote the Safe Patient Care Act, drafted for the 2023-2024 Michigan legislative session and sponsored by the Democratic Party. The bill, which has not been adopted in the three years since it was drafted, would establish legally required staffing ratios at Michigan hospitals.

The Safe Patient Care Act, which has been promoted by many

unions in the healthcare industry, has not become law because it is opposed and lobbied against by the Michigan Health & Hospitals Association (MHHA), the statewide business association representing the employers.

The argument made by MHHA against the law is transparent: safe staffing would cost too much money and damage the bottom line of the health care corporations. Moreover, states such as California have had staffing laws for years, yet shortages, overwork, and mandatory overtime have not disappeared. The bill would not halt the drive by hospitals to deliberately run their operations with staff shortages so as to ensure increased profitability.

That same pattern was on display at the mass informational picket on Wednesday at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, where some 800 Teamsters members turned out from Locals 332, 299 and 337 in support of the strike at Genesys Hospital. The event was presented as part of the campaign in support of the “unfair labor practice” strike in Grand Blanc.

However, the union did not call the broader Henry Ford workforce out on strike or transform the support at the Detroit hospital for the Genesys nurses into an action against the healthcare corporations. The informational picket served as a controlled protest and substitute for the mass action required to fight for what the Genesys workers are demanding.

The Teamsters union apparatus further revealed its deliberate isolation of the Genesys strikers by mobilizing workers from Local 299, which includes car haulers and freight workers, and Local 337, which includes food and beverage drivers, warehouse workers, and bakery workers, while doing nothing to mobilize the 10,000 registered nurses at the Corewell Health system in Detroit, members of Teamsters Local 2024, who recently voted by 90 percent for strike action.

That vote, one of the largest in the recent history of the healthcare industry, expressed explosive anger over understaffing, mandatory overtime, and deteriorating conditions. Instead of preparing a common fight across hospital systems, the Teamsters have kept these struggles compartmentalized, one of the surest signs that the bureaucracy’s primary concern is containing the movement of the working class.

This is the aim of the union apparatus, which fears nothing so much as an independent movement of healthcare workers. Unable to prevent a strike, it conspires with management to isolate and defeat it.

Sean O’Brien and the Teamsters bureaucracy do not represent hospital workers or any section of the working class. They are a wealthy and privileged social layer, hostile to the workers, which functions to contain workers’ anger and dissipate the energy of the working class so as to defend the corporations and their political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties.

The situation at Henry Ford Genesys is not unique. The isolation and betrayal of the Grand Blanc, Michigan nurses and case workers is part of a pattern repeated and again by the Teamsters bureaucracy, whether against UPS workers, public sector employees or airline pilots. This is also true for other unions such as the United Auto Workers (UAW), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the American Federation of State,

County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), to name only a few.

Over many decades the unions have been transformed into instruments of the employers and the government for controlling the working class and undermining all efforts to unify the struggles across industries and national boundaries. In the case of the Teamsters union in particular, the bureaucrats at the top, who receive salaries in the high six figures, have no problem supporting the fascist Donald Trump and his wars of conquest, including the illegal invasion of Venezuela and the criminal war against Iran.

The conclusion that hospital workers must draw is inescapable. The Genesys strike is in danger of being defeated. Workers have taken other jobs and the numbers on the picket lines have declined dramatically over the past eight months. This situation points to the need for a rebellion against the union apparatus itself. Nurses, case workers, and other healthcare employees must form rank-and-file committees, democratically controlled by the workers themselves and independent of the Teamsters bureaucracy.

Such committees would make it possible to unite hospital workers across bargaining units, hospitals, and systems; to coordinate mass strike action; and to broaden the fight over staffing and wages to other sections of the working class. That means reaching auto workers, logistics workers, educators, and others facing the same corporate and government offensive.

A rank-and-file movement would be able to advance a social perspective that met the needs of the working class: healthcare as a basic human right, not a commodity. That means no-cost care for all, fully funded staffing levels, an end to mandatory overtime, and the transfer of decision-making from corporate executives and their union stooges to the workers who provide the care.

The struggle at Henry Ford Genesys is not only about one hospital or one contract. It is part of a broader confrontation with the capitalist system itself, whose profits are incompatible with safe, humane and universal healthcare.

The courage of the Genesys Hospital strikers deserves a fighting strategy equal to the workers’ resolve. The way forward is not isolation, lobbying, or symbolic protests. It is the independent organization of rank-and-file power, the expansion of the struggle and the unification of all healthcare workers in opposition to the hospital chains, the union bureaucracy and the capitalist system they defend.



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