



STAT FACTS

A Newsletter for Health Care Workers

Health Care Workers Council of the Steelworkers

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USW Local 7600 Celebrates 36th Year as Steelworkers With a New Agreement With Kaiser Permanente in Southern California



Members of USW Local 7600, which represents 4,500 employees of Kaiser Permanente (KP) in Fontana, California, have reached a new five-year national agreement negotiated through interest-based bargaining. Over the past 24 months, the Local 7600 Leadership Team worked with the other coalition unions to craft the National Partnership Agreement.

Local 7600 is the oldest health care union within the Health Care Workers Council. It began in 1949 when employees at Kaiser Permanente hospitals and clinics first gained the right to union representation by the Steelworkers.

In August 2005, the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions and KP management met in Atlanta, Georgia, to work out the details and finalize the agreement.

"This was the toughest round of negotiations I have ever experienced as lead negotiator for our local," said Roy Wiles, President of Local 7600. "Each member of our Bargaining Team participated on an Issues Committee to develop a proposal to be presented and endorsed by the entire body. Our representatives worked day and night to reach a consensus on the issues that impact our jobs, our wages and our families. While we did not get everything we wanted, we did make significant gains. When local bargaining began, we went before management confident that we would make more improvements. While we were at the table, Local 7600 activists were at each worksite keeping our members informed. We worked hard to build power for our members and their families."

The agreement includes across-the-board wage increases, performance bonuses, and a

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United Steelworkers
Five Gateway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Tel: 412-562-2505
Fax: 412-562-2520

www.steelworkers-usw.org/hcwc

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT... CONTRACT UPDATES FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE

CARRIAGE HOUSE RATIFIES FIRST CONTRACT

The newest members of District 2 ratified a two-year agreement after nine months of bargaining. The unit was certified on October 4, 2004, representing 100 nursing home employees. The agreement was ratified on August 30, 2005. The bargaining team is very pleased with their new contract after a very tough round of negotiations. Rocky Chase, Vice President of Local 12075, describes the committee as outstanding, strong and intelligent. "No one ever wanted to give up. When the company would push the committee, [they] would push back. It is a good first contract and an excellent building block for the future. We welcome them into our Local Union with the other 1,000 health care workers we represent in mid-Michigan." The contract includes raises, rights and respect for the workers whose job is to take care of Michigan's elderly.



L-R: Mary Mark, V.P. Rocky Chase, Sue Wisniewski, Lisa Commire. Not pictured is Staff Rep. Rich Dietrich.

MEMBERS RATIFY FIRST UNION CONTRACTS FOR OROVILLE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES

Health care employees at Oroville Hospital in the technical, service, business office and clinic bargaining units met in separate meetings held on December 27, 28 and 29 and voted to approve their respective initial three-year labor agreements. The terms of each agreement became official when they were approved by a majority vote of union members in the bargaining unit.



Front l-r: Karen Wallace, Thomas Clancy. Back l-r: Sandy Harper, Sue Cruise, Gale Karrle, Shonna Maxwell and Pauline Foley. Absent from the picture: Jackie Jones and Madrice Warren.

The new agreements, effective January 1, secure benefits, and improve wages and working conditions for more than 600 hospital employees.

"The labor agreements provide concrete improvements for Oroville Hospital employees and will enable them to have a strong voice at work," said Director Terry Bonds, United Steelworkers District 12. "Although negotiating first agreements is often a challenge, we look forward to continuing to develop a positive relationship with hospital management that benefits both workers and patients."

The new three-year agreements contain strong grievance and arbitration procedures with a "just cause" standard. The agreements also provide for paid annual vacations and holidays, and annual sick leave accrual. All full-time and part-time employees will be eligible to participate in the hospital's retirement, medical, prescription, dental and vision care plans.

A feature of each new agreement is the establishment of a standard wage rate structure that provides uniform step increases of 3.75 percent, with advancement to the maximum steps of the structure based on service with the hospital. In addition to the new wage rate structure, each agreement provides a general increase of 2 percent on both the first and second anniversary dates of the agreement.

"We could not have achieved this contract without membership support," said Karen Wallace, coordinator of the USW Health Care Local 9600 bargaining committee. "I hope that members will take advantage of the opportunities provided by the agreements to get even more involved in their Union. That is how we will build our power for the future."

For more information about the HCWC or to be added to the email list, please contact Leslie Curtis at: lcurtis@steelworkers-usw.org

USW Local 7600 Celebrates 36th Year as Steelworkers

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cant investment in a joint training fund for workforce development. In addition, it addresses issues such as service quality, attendance (the new policy provides the use of economic incentives for appropriate use of sick leave) and provides for a care management program for Kaiser members that addresses issues such as diabetes, obesity, chronic pain and smoking addiction. These issues are not normally addressed in collective bargaining. A re-opener is provided for in the third year that is limited to wage increases and retiree medical benefits. There are no benefit reductions.



"This was the toughest round of negotiations I have ever experienced as lead negotiator for our local . . . We worked hard to build power for our members and their families."

Roy Wiles, President of Local 7600



Joint table of Local 7600 members and Kaiser management.

The agreement between the mammoth health maintenance organization and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, which is comprised of 29 locals in 10 national unions covering employees at more than 400 facilities in nine states and the District of Columbia, has been approved by Kaiser's board of directors and ratified by members of each local union.

USW and the Ontario Federation of Labour Kick Off Staffing Campaign

In May and June, 2005, the Ontario Federation of Labour, working in conjunction with affiliated health care unions, sponsored meetings in 17 Ontario cities to examine the consequences of understaffing. On a daily basis, those charged with providing the most vital human services were telling each other, their union, management and the government that patients and clients were either not receiving the care they needed or were being placed in harm's way. The message was the same at every regional meeting: in Hamilton; Orillia; Ottawa; St. Catharines; Kinston; Kitchener; Brockville; Thunder Bay; Sudbury; Toronto; Timmons; Windsor; London; Owen Sound; and Peterborough, workers were beyond the limit of being able to cope. "The stress of trying to keep up, but of not being able to, has been unbelievable," said one hospital worker. "But you see when we can't keep up or do our jobs properly, people can die or get really, really ill. I feel sick every day, and every day when I get home I have a good cry for all my patients who didn't get what

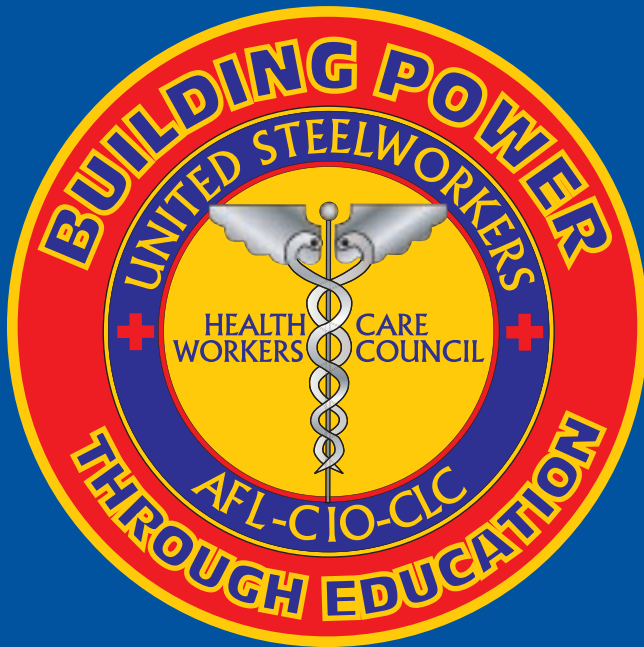
they deserve." The Federation published a report of their findings. This report is a collection of many of the stories heard around the provinces. It is also a record of first-ever meetings of health care workers from all sectors and unions. Workers from nursing homes and homes for the aged, retirement homes, hospitals, emergency services, laboratories, home care, public health units and mental health facilities shared their stories and learned from each other. In doing so, they came to mutual conclusions that all sectors and workplaces have been hard hit by understaffing; the problems associated with understaffing and its consequences are systemic and serious.

The Federation is demanding that more health care workers are hired to relieve the burden of understaffing. There is no health care without people. The Ontario government must immediately and significantly increase staffing numbers in all sectors. They are requesting of their government that the following policies be put in place immediately:



1. Declare an immediate moratorium on layoffs in hospitals.
2. Establish a required minimum standard of 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged.
3. Establish required minimum standards for staffing with appropriate complement of full-time workers in all health care sectors.

To learn more about the campaign and find out how you can help, please log on to www.ofl.ca and click on "Understaffed and Under Pressure: More Health Care Workers Now" campaign or call them at 1-800-668-9138.



The Health Care Workers Council has been working in all USW districts hosting trainings and participating in district meetings. Each council meeting or training gives our members the opportunity to meet, discuss strategies and learn new skills to take back to their facilities to "Build the Power" needed to make their workplaces better and provide care to their patients and residents.

Local 4-200



- Health care workers from Hawkesbury, Canada, met to discuss current issues and activities of the Canadian Labor Movement to improve the staffing of the current public and private health care system. Participants agreed to support and be active in the "Understaffed and Under Pressure" campaign sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Labour (CLC). Members agreed to discuss the report with others and get support cards signed by their co-workers and families to send to legislators to increase the staffing funding in the hospital and long term care facilities. Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care were invited to give a presentation of the Standard of Care for Long Term Care Facilities within Ontario, Canada. The Representatives from the Ministry gave a brief overview of the program and what evaluators look for when they are inspecting long term care homes for violations in the care standard. The Council also discussed the upcoming meeting of the Conference of Health Unions of the Americas in Argentina in November, 2005. Jorge Garcia-Orgales was selected to represent the USW at the conference.

Health Unions of the Americas in Argentina in November, 2005. Jorge Garcia-Orgales was selected to represent the USW at the conference.



Local 14995



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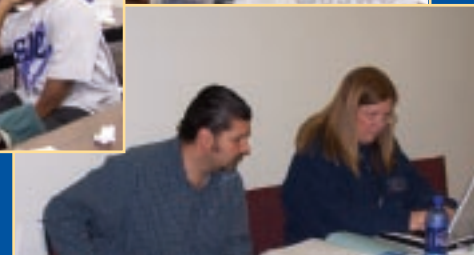
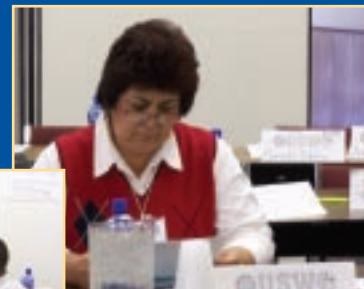
Canadian Health Care Workers

- Building Power Training: Health care local unions from all over the country signed up to participate in the USW International Campaign Department's "Building Power" training. "Building Power" is a member mobilization education program that is used during contract negotiations. Some of the USW health care locals that participated were: Local 2801, Long Beach Memorial Hospital; Local 2801-01, Sodexho Long Beach; and Local 14495, Norton Community Hospital. The training was five days of intensive training to provide members with the knowledge needed to run a successful contract campaign.



- Nurse Steward Training: Nurses from USW Local 4-200 met to participate in the HCWC Nurse Steward Training. Local 4-200 represents 1100 registered nurses that work at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The training was developed specifically by the HCWC to train stewards to represent their co-workers in the health care setting. Local 4-200, a former PACE local, is grateful for all the support they have received from the HCWC since becoming Steelworkers. Fifteen nurses participated in the training. Nearly half of the participants were new stewards and were looking forward to their new roles as nurse advocates. Health Care Workers Council staff committed to return to work with the local on "Building Power" and "Protect Your Practice" training in the

Local 2801



Local 9460



District 4

USW Welcomes Former PACE Nurses and Health Care Workers Into the USW Health Care Workers Council

When the Steelworkers and PACE unions merged in April 2005, several thousand PACE health care members joined the USW Health Care Workers Council (HCWC). USW International President Leo W. Gerard, along with the HCWC staff, officially welcomed the former PACE units at the final PACE Regions 1 and 3 Leadership Conference held in Atlantic City in December 2005. Health care units attending the conference included

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital; St. Vincent DePaul; Cranford Extended; Edison Public Health; Roosevelt; VNACJ (Middlesex); and, Woodbridge health care workers.



USW District 4 Director Bill Pienta and Region 1 Director Gary Cook joined the health care members for a special meeting with President Gerard. At the meeting, Gerard spoke of the struggles of health care members and the USW's commitment to our health care workers within our membership.

"The USW HCWC staff understand the special needs of nurses and other health care workers and are working hard to access and develop strategies to move forward in the face of the changing dynamics of health care. Health care is different from many of the other industries that the USW and PACE represent. We have specialized issues and concerns that are very different from the typical shop floor. We plan to participate fully in the activities of the Council like steward training, health and safety training and building power training," said Jerry Collins, president of Local 4-200 (Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital of New Brunswick, New Jersey). Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJU) represents over 1,200 registered nurses at the Magnet Status facility, and 10 registered nurses from RWJU were delegates to this conference.



Members from all the health care units were excited about the programs offered by the HCWC. During the conference, members also attended classes on grievance handling, union administration, trustee training, building power, and the pension and health care trust.

United Steelworkers and the Health Care Workers Council Urge Every USW Member to Join the Fight for Universal Health Care

For many years, the USW Executive Board has taken the position of calling for universal health care coverage for all. Towards this end, the Steelworkers have joined arms with *Health Care Now*, a national organization dedicated to a national single-payer health care system that will serve everybody in the United States. USW President Leo W. Gerard is the co-chair of this organization. "Together we are working to build a movement for a universal health care system in this country by developing an empowered leadership at the grassroots level who understand the issues and engage in a variety of tactics to make it happen. Our work is to convince everyone — the business community, the press, our clergy, our union leaders and members and members of Congress — that we can afford health care for everybody. The Steelworkers are not alone in this fight." Many national organizations have signed

onto the campaign and have provided staff and resources in an effort to make universal health care a reality. These organizations include the Physicians for a National Health Program; the Coalition of Labor Union Women; United Mine Workers; the United Auto Workers; the National Organization of Women; and many other faith-based organizations.

The Health Care Workers Council would like to encourage every USW member to join together with *Health Care Now* to make universal health care a reality. *Health Care Now* is sponsoring a series of public congressional hearings around the country. The Health Care Workers Council feels it can have more impact on this issue because our members see every day how devastating it is for patients, who, when faced with a health crisis, do not have health care. Instead of focusing on

District 10

POLITICS IS UNION BUSINESS

On December 13, 2005, District 10 Director John DeFazio welcomed health care workers from his district to their first Health Care Council meeting.

Participants included members from Woodland Place; Armstrong County Memorial Hospital; Verland Foundation, Inc.; Vincentian Regency; Providence Care Center; and Monongahela Valley Hospital.



“Participation in the electoral process is very important to the success or failure of our health care system. State and federal funding for our health care system is directed by our elected officials. It is incumbent upon every health care worker to participate in this process,” said Director DeFazio as he discussed the role of politics in the American labor movement and the changing political landscape.

DeFazio talked to participants about the USW and the AFL-CIO endorsement process, the COPE records of the current candidates running for U.S. Congress, and the state of Pennsylvania and the gubernatorial race.

Linda Ulizio of Local 1324 said that she is acutely aware how state politics affects the funding of the state-run mental health facility for which she works. “Currently we are waiting for a negotiated raise that was based on a budgeted amount promised from the state. Until the Pennsylvania state government sends the money to my agency, we have to wait for our raises. If our elected officials cut our allotment or change our budgeted amount, it will affect not only our wages and benefits, but also the number of available staff, thereby affecting patient care. I am glad that the USW is involved in politics. I don’t want to vote for someone who may vote to cut my job or benefits.”

USW staff made presentations to members on collective bargaining, organizing and wage analysis. Participants expressed enthusiasm and appreciation that, through the Council, they now have the opportunity to share experiences and ideas, and to receive training designed to meet their needs as union representatives and health care workers.

United Steelworkers and the Health Care Workers Council Urge Every USW Member to Join the Fight for Universal Health Care *(continued from page 6)*

getting well, many of our patients are worried about how they are going to pay for their hospital stay or for the medicines needed once they are discharged.

Everyone needs to join this fight. There are a lot of ways to support this effort.

We are asking each member to try to attend one of the upcoming congressional hearings being held across the country. Hearings are being added every day. To find the most up-to-date list of hearings and a complete list of activities that will help us to support universal health care in the United States,

"Our work is to convince everyone – the business community, the press, our clergy, our union leaders and members and members of Congress that we can afford health care for everybody."

USW President Leo W. Gerard

please visit the *Health Care Now* web site at www.healthcare-now.org. You can also sign up to be part of their e-mail list to receive notice of the most current activities as the campaign develops.

The HCWC is looking forward to the day that universal health care is a reality. The USW has published a *Health Care Bill of Rights*. In it we state: "Everybody has a right to quality health care regardless of financial standing. The government must insure that no American is denied needed health care services because of inability to pay. The government must see that health care costs are brought under control. Everybody has a right to affordable prescription drugs." You can view the entire text of the *USW Health Care Bill of Rights* online at www.steelworkers-usw.org. In many unorganized hospitals and nursing homes, health care workers cannot receive, nor can they afford, the very care which they provide. In partnership with *Health Care Now*, we can make a difference and bring health care to every American.

*Health and Safety Training
Specifically for Health Care Workers Available from the HCWC*



The health services sector is the largest employer in private industry. In 2001 more health care workers were injured than workers in any other sector, with slips, trips and falls accounting for the largest proportion of lost time injuries (21 percent). The incidence rate of same level STF injuries in hospitals was almost twice that of private industry (38.6 vs. 20.8 per 10,000 employees). Current data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the total number of recordable cases of injury and illness for the nursing home industry are higher than in the construction industry, an industry with widely recognized hazards. Of all U.S. health care workers, employees of nursing and personal care facilities were at the highest risk of job-related injuries. Hospital workers were at the highest risk of suffering a fatal injury. Aides in nursing and personal care facilities have the highest rate for disabling back injuries, followed by licensed practical nurses, aides, and registered nurses in hospitals. Compared with 21 other occupations based on workers' compensations, back injury claims revealed that back injury problems for nursing occupations were more serious than those recorded for other occupational groups.

In an effort to educate our members on health hazards in the health care setting, the Health Care Workers Council has developed a specialized

Health and Safety training for health care workers. Health and safety hazards within the health care setting generally fall into five categories:

- Environmental, Mechanical/Biomedical : Factors encountered in the work environment that cause accidents, injuries, strain or discomfort.
- Physical: Agents within the work environment that can cause tissue trauma.
- Psychological: Factors and situations encountered or associated with one's job or work environment that create stress, emotional strain and/or other interpersonal problems.
- Chemical: Various forms of chemicals that are potentially toxic or irritating to the body system, including medications, solutions and gases.
- Biological: Infectious/biological agents, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites that may be transmitted by contact with infected patients or contaminated body secretions/fluids.

During the training participants are educated on the recommended guidelines for controlling safety hazards in hospitals and nursing homes. Every health care employer is obligated to provide a safe workplace under existing federal and state laws. The training reviews those obligations and develops strategies on how to have them addressed either under current health and safety contract language or through the federal or state OSHA complaint process. Participants also spend some time evaluating the effectiveness of their health and safety committee, and discuss ways to improve their workplace by using the health and safety committee more successfully.



Ready to Join Your Fellow Health Care Workers for Better Jobs, Better Patient Care and a Better Quality of Life?
Contact the HCWC!

Health Care Workers Council HOTLINE: 1-800-637-8513