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Parkview Registered Nurses Ratify First UNAC/UHCP Union Contract



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

Thirteen months of prolonged negotiations ends as nurses overwhelmingly ratified their first union contract, which restored a 5% pay cut and guarantees nurses a voice in the workplace

On April 17, Parkview Community Hospital Registered Nurses voted to ratify their first union contract with UNAC/UHCP after 13 months of prolonged negotiations with hospital management. Parkview RNs ratified the two-year contract by an overwhelming majority.

“Parkview RNs have worked long and hard toward achieving our first contract and gaining a voice in the workplace,” stated Penny Brown, an RN in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. “We are glad that we will finally have the opportunity to work alongside hospital management to make Parkview a premiere provider of quality patient care for the Riverside community.”

The new contract will restore a 5% wage cut taken out of nurses’ salaries by management in October of 2008. UNAC/UHCP filed Unfair Labor Practice charges against Parkview for applying the cut without making a good faith effort to bargain with

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Kathy Sackman, RN
President

Ken Deitz, RN
Executive Vice President

Barbara Blake, RN
State Secretary

Delima R. MacDonald, RN, BS
State Treasurer

THE VOICE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS



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UNAC/UHCP OFFICERS

Kathy J. Sackman, RN
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Barbara Blake, RN
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Bill Rouse
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to the Officers*

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STAFF ORGANIZERS

Sunny Barana
Vanessa Caballero
Thor Causing
Tony Dorono
Olivia Guevara
Kuusela Hilo

POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVE

Jeremy Lanni

Please address inquiries or articles for
The Voice to info@unac-ca.org

Design/Layout by Russell Miller

Take Action!



CALL SENATOR FEINSTEIN TODAY!

The **Employee Free Choice Act** would create a fairer process for union organizing by:

- ▶ establishing stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations;
- ▶ providing mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes; and
- ▶ allowing employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.

The Employee Free Choice Act would restore fairness to the union organizing process so employees don't have to put their jobs and livelihoods on the line just to have a voice in the workplace.

We want Senator Dianne Feinstein to co-sponsor the Employee Free Choice Act and need your help!

Call **1-866-207-2060** and follow the prompts. When you are connected to a staff person, tell them you are calling to ask Senator Feinstein to co-sponsor the Employee Free Choice Act!

UNAC/UHCP Leaders Honored

UNAC/UHCP President Kathy J. Sackman, RN, Treasurer Delima MacDonald, RN, Secretary Barbara Blake, RN, and retired Executive Vice President Sonia Moseley were honored with 57 other women for their contributions to the labor movement in Orange County on May 27th.

Titled “An Evening to Honor Heroines Among Us: Past, Present & Future,” the Orange County Labor Federation, in partnership with the AFL-CIO, presented Season Five of the play “Speaking Up!” in Buena Park at UFCW Local 324. Starring Orange County women labor leaders and activists, the play highlighted the labor struggles of several women, such as Mother Jones, Anne Moody, and Dolores Huerta.

After a reading of an original poem by Irvine City Councilwoman Beth Krom, honorees Sackman, Blake, MacDonald, and Moseley received Certificates of Congressional Recognition for their outstanding leadership and advocacy for women’s issues from Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez and Assemblyman Jose Solorio.



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

Pictured: (left to right) Kathy J. Sackman, RN, Sonia Moseley, NP, Delima MacDonald, RN; Not pictured: Barbara Blake, RN

Parkview Ratifies First Contract

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the nurses’ representatives, and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found merit in the charges and issued a formal complaint against the hospital. During the NLRB trial in early April, UNAC/UHCP and Parkview management reached agreement to finalize the contract in lieu of continuing the trial.

“Parkview RNs in the Parkview Registered Nurses Association are happy that hospital management finally understands the value of respecting the voice of nurses in the workplace,” said Kathy Sackman, RN, UNAC/UHCP president. “We all look forward to an effective partnership with Parkview management and to promoting the most efficient provision of high quality patient care possible at Parkview.”

One vital component of the new Parkview RN union contract is the creation of a Registered Nurse Advisory Committee (RNAC) that will meet on a monthly basis to discuss various issues impacting nurses in the workplace and their ability to provide patient care. The RNAC committee will serve to promote advancements in patient care and satisfaction throughout the hospital.

Garcia Testifies to Congress Regarding Swine Flu

UNAC/UHCP member Miguel Garcia, RN, testified on May 7 before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor at a hearing on “Ensuring Preparedness Against the Flu Virus at School and Work.”

“Because I work in the Emergency Room at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center, my fellow RNs are on the frontline of fighting the current outbreak of the swine flu,” stated Garcia. “I am testifying on behalf of UNAC/UHCP because we represent thousands of nurses and other health care professionals who need consistent protections in the workplace.”

Currently there is no comprehensive federal standard that requires employers to protect health care workers from an airborne virus like H1N1 or tuberculosis. There are OSHA and CDC guidelines, but to date these guidelines have only been voluntary.

“In many respects my employer is the exemplar in preparedness,” said Garcia. “However, many health care employers have not taken the necessary steps to prepare and protect health care workers from a flu pandemic or the current outbreak of the H1N1 flu infection.”

Utilizing its nationally recognized Labor Management Partnership, Kaiser has engaged its union partners to: 1) closely monitor the swine flu pandemic and its impact on patient and worker needs; 2) rapidly adapt guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 3) monitor respiratory protection programs; and 4) implement an aggressive program of worker and member hand washing, which is vital to reducing flu infection and progression.



PHOTO BY JIMMY GOMEZ

UNAC/UHCP member Miguel Garcia, RN, highlights the need for protections in the workplace for health care professionals

HIPAA Regulations Computer-based Patient Records

Many safeguards are put into practice in our workplaces to ensure that patient privacy is maintained in accordance with HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act). Here are some useful tips to help maintain patient privacy and protect your accountability with regard to Computer-based Patient Records (CPRs).

1. Remember to log-off of your computers and/or other digital devices EVERY TIME you finish reviewing a CPR or must step away from it, even if only for a moment.
2. Be aware of your surroundings – look out for anyone who might be in visual range of your digital files and take the appropriate safeguards to properly conceal the information from wandering eyes.
3. NEVER share your password with ANYONE.

Improving patient care also means ensuring patient privacy. Implement appropriate safeguards to protect your patients, your employer, and yourself.



Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act

**Mary Cavanaugh, O.D.,
Kaiser Permanente Association of Southern California Optometrists**

Dr. Mary Cavanaugh has been a Kaiser optometrist for 25 years. As a practicing clinician, patient care is her highest priority and her life's work. Worried that the retail end of optometry was overshadowing medical care, Cavanaugh and her colleagues decided to form a union with the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals.

While patient care was the primary reason for forming a union, the optometrists at Kaiser also felt they were losing their voices as professionals within Kaiser's complex system.

Cavanaugh explains: "It was clear that the unions who dealt with Kaiser were getting their members' needs met. It looked like it was going to be business as usual for the employees who weren't represented."

The wages and benefits were one reason to form a union, but gaining a voice was every bit as important to the doctors.

In 2000, the optometrists began their campaign to form a union at Kaiser under the Labor Management Partnership's (LMP) neutrality and majority sign-up organizing agreement. Within four months, an overwhelming majority of the optometrists signed up for UNAC/UHCP representation.

The benefits of having a union have been deep and lasting for Cavanaugh and her colleagues. "I'm thoroughly convinced that it was the best thing to do, and a majority of my co-workers would agree," she says. "We have an LMP that helps people understand the workings of the company better, and work together to improve patient care."

The optometrists at Kaiser are now part of the master contract with Kaiser. Cavanaugh reports, "We've been able to reduce our patient load and have made huge strides in terms of patient care."



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

Dr. Mary Cavanaugh and other Kaiser optometrists utilized the company's national neutrality and majority sign-up organizing agreement to join UNAC/UHCP

UNAC Promotes Landmark Reporting for Nonprofit Hospitals

UNAC/UHCP representatives appeared before the California Board of Equalization on April 15 to support a first-of-its-kind supplemental reporting requirement for non-profit hospitals in an effort to improve disclosure requirements. The Board voted to implement the supplemental reporting requirement.

In approving the changes, the Board of Equalization now has access to more reliable data to justify the millions of tax dollars provided through tax exemptions to California's non-profit hospitals. As a regulatory agency over these entities, the Board has a fiscal responsibility to the state's approximately 37 million residents to ensure non-profit hospital compliance with Board requirements. The Board has determined that supplemental reporting would make regulatory reviews more effective and transparent.

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Why Politics Matters and the Way Forward

By Jimmy Gomez, UNAC/UHCP Political Director

Greek statesman and orator Pericles once said, “Just because you do not take an interest in politics does not mean politics will not take an interest in you.”

As a union of health care professionals, we have witnessed how legislation and politics often determines the parameters of contracts, working conditions, and our members’ ability to perform their jobs or join a union. The only way to protect and promote our interests in the legislative process, such as overtime pay and nurse-to-patient ratios, is through a comprehensive legislative and political program.

Our new program will implement a five-pronged strategy:

1. Create a Robust Legislative Agenda and Presence in Sacramento

- The legislative and political decisions made in Sacramento impact our members and our politics within our districts. Without a legislative agenda, we have no direction to address the political/legislative issues that impact our nurses and other health care professionals.

2. Participate in County Labor Federation Activities

- Most political and labor activities begin with or are supported by labor federations. Being part of the larger labor community shows solidarity and helps support our interests regarding legislative issues and during contract negotiations.

3. Create a Process to Endorse Candidates and Propositions

- Endorsements allow UNAC/UHCP to back candidates who support our positions on issues that directly impact our members, while also communicating our values and goals to elected officials and the public.

4. Conduct Legislative and Political Campaigns

- Endorsements are of limited value if UNAC/UHCP does not implement legislative and political campaigns to support our positions. In turn, these campaigns help build influence with elected officials and hold them accountable to our membership.

5. Better Communicate Legislative and Political Activities

- Better communication with the membership and the public about our issues and positions increases our name identification, political capital (resources/investment) and legislative/political effectiveness.

As we begin to implement this strategy, we encourage input and participation because politics DOES matter. If we do not stand together as a voice for improving health care, we stand to lose what we have gained over the past 30 years.

UNAC/UHCP 2009 State Legislative Priorities

By Barbara Blake, RN, State Secretary

UNAC/UHCP supports the following legislation:

AB 664 Hospital Employee Workers' Compensation Presumption (Skinner – D): Creates presumption under workers' compensation that back or neck injuries, MRSA, and other blood-borne infectious diseases suffered by hospital employees are job related.

AB 849 Family and Medical Leave (Swanson – D): Expands job-protected leave to include care for adult children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren and parents-in-law, assuring protection of long-term financial security for California workers.

AB 1295 Postsecondary Education, Nursing Programs (Fuller – R): Establishes a clearly defined pathway for Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) students to transfer between California Community Colleges and State Universities to obtain Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees.

SB 294 Nurse Practitioners Scope of Practice (Negrete-McLeod – D): Clarifies scope of practice to include signing of disability certifications for patients who need documentation for their employers, ordering durable medical equipment, and ordering treatment in home care environments.

SB 360 Health Facilities and Direct Care Nurses (Yee – D): Requires direct care registered nursing new hires to receive and complete an orientation to their patient care unit and hospital prior to being counted as staff in computing the nurse-to-patient ratio.

SB 810 Single-Payer Health Care Coverage (Leno – D): Establishes the California Health Care System (CHS), making all California residents eligible for certain health care benefits.

SB 1 Health Care Coverage for Children (Steinberg – D): Expands eligibility for Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs by modifying the applicable program requirements.



PHOTO BY JIMMY GOMEZ

State Secretary Barbara Blake, RN, testified on behalf of SB294, the NP Scope of Practice bill, at the Senate Business and Professions Committee meeting in April.

Reporting for Nonprofit Hospitals

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“The nurses and health care professionals we represent are dedicated to improving the quality of care for their patients,” stated Kathy Sackman, RN, UNAC/UHCP president. “Supplemental reporting for nonprofit hospitals promotes an environment of greater transparency and greater accountability to California’s taxpayers, and will create a more efficient health care setting focused on maximizing these tax dollars to the benefit of the patients who utilize these services.”

Recently, the California State Auditor Bureau of State Audits conducted a study that found that the uncompensated care costs provided by California’s nonprofit and for-profit hospitals were not significantly different. The State Auditor also found it virtually impossible to quantify the economic value provided by California’s nonprofit hospitals due to a lack of uniform reporting requirements.

“It is vital that appropriate reporting methods are in place to ensure transparency within any health care system that is funded, in large part, by taxpayer dollars,” said Sackman. “Californians want to know that their taxes are being used wisely, and the supplemental reporting requirements for nonprofit hospitals is a significant step in that direction.”

UNAC/UHCP in Solidarity

By Jeremy Lanni, UNAC/UHCP Political Representative

UNAC/UHCP is not alone in our fight for social justice. We regularly partner with other unions when we are advocating for health care reform and workers' rights because, as a union, we know that there is strength in solidarity.

All of the unions with whom we partner on our campaigns are affiliated with the AFL-CIO or Change to Win, two national organizations representing millions of union members in health care, manufacturing, retail, construction, hospitality, entertainment and other industries. These national organizations express the power of solidarity through state and local bodies.

Our state body is the California Labor Federation and our local bodies are the central labor councils in Los Angeles County, San Bernardino/Riverside Counties, Orange County and San Diego County. It is primarily through the central labor councils that UNAC/UHCP meets and partners with unions that share our values and objectives.

Recently UNAC/UHCP members and members of our partner unions have been demonstrating solidarity through our shared support for the Employee Free Choice Act. As part of our ongoing campaign to persuade Senator Dianne Feinstein (see page 2) to sponsor the Act, we have marched ten miles through Los Angeles, written and delivered thousands of letters, made thousands of phone calls, participated in twenty-four hour vigils, attended numerous rallies, and organized countless meetings with legislators. It is through these time-tested and effective solidarity efforts that the labor movement is able to achieve significant victories for its individual unions. The message of solidarity is clear – we're in this together and we're stronger for it!

Reaching the Next Generation

By Jeremy Lanni, UNAC/UHCP Political Representative

This year UNAC/UHCP proudly continued our participation in the Union Apprenticeship and Training Forum on May 16, an event sponsored annually by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Alliance for Education and the Central Labor Council AFL-CIO of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.



PHOTO BY JEREMY LANNI

RNs Danny Cortez and Jonathan Bestwick speak to several high school students about a career in health care

Each year the forum educates young people about the training and employment opportunities available to them through local unions. Careers in a wide variety of fields are addressed, ranging from health care to the building trades.

UNAC/UHCP members Jonathan Bestwick, an RN at Kaiser Baldwin Park, Danny Cortez, an RN at Kaiser Riverside, and Mike and Chris Hinsley, RNs at Kaiser Fontana, represented our union and the health care field. They spoke with over two hundred high school students, and explained just how rewarding and lucrative a career in health care could be.

The students were very excited to learn about careers in health care and the benefits of belonging to a union like UNAC/UHCP. In fact, our booth had more attendees than the firefighters' booth – and the firefighters were extinguishing real fires in their demonstration truck! Jon, Mike, Chris and Danny did an absolutely fantastic job reaching out to our next generation of health care professionals. Well done!

Showing Our Solidarity

UNAC/UHCP's Joy Harvey, RN, spoke up for AT&T employees at a rally held on April 24 by the Communications Workers of America (CWA). In CWA's negotiations with AT&T – the largest unionized, private-sector employer in the nation – AT&T representatives sought to cut employee health care and retiree benefits.

Photo by Jeremy Lanni



12th Annual National Nurses Congress

Reclaiming the American Dream

Approximately 60 UNAC/UHCP members and staff attended the 12th Annual AFSCME-United Nurses of America (UNA) National Nurses Congress, held in Washington, D.C. from May 4-7, 2009. UNAC/UHCP representatives participated in multiple workshops on a variety of topics, including effective coalition building, hospital acquired and resistant infections, safe patient handling initiatives, staffing ratios, mobilizing members, and investment education.

AFSCME International President Gerald W. McEntee addressed attendees, noting the positive direction and ongoing steps being taken by President Barack Obama in AFSCME's priority areas of health care reform, workplace safety, and the Employee Free Choice Act. McEntee's stirring speech mentioned several union wins in the midst of difficult economic times, the H1N1 virus, and the country's ongoing health care crisis.

"As President Obama has said, we need to see problems as solvable," stated McEntee. "In that way, we can act on them and make change happen. Let's reclaim the American Dream for working families!"

McEntee noted the strain of our existing health care system on state and federal budgets, and the immediate need for health care reform. He explained that we need an "American solution," where the responsibility for guaranteeing quality, affordable health care is shared by individuals, employers and government.

The following day, after a training on how to effectively lobby for change, some 300 nurses hopped on buses and descended on Capitol Hill to lobby their representatives on comprehensive health care reform, including discussing a public health insurance option, employer responsibility, nurse staffing ratios, and preventing the taxation of health care benefits as income. UNAC/UHCP RNs and other California AFSCME nurses, who had the opportunity to speak with a staff person from Senator Dianne Feinstein's office, also spoke up for the Employee Free Choice Act.

"Everyone should have the right to organize," shared UNAC/UHCP Vice President Ken Deitz, RN. "The Employee Free Choice Act ensures that right for employees, provides for mediation and binding arbitration if employees and the employer cannot achieve a contract within 90 days, and strengthens penalties for employer violations during organizing and first contract negotiations."

After three full days of activities, networking, and standing together for the nursing profession, attendees returned to their respective home states, energized and motivated to continue the push for comprehensive health care reform and the Employee Free Choice Act.



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

UNAC/UHCP RNs and other AFSCME nurses visit Senator Dianne Feinstein's office to discuss comprehensive health care reform and the Employee Free Choice Act

RN Recognized as Nurse of the Year

On May 12, Kim Luong, RN, BSN, who provides patient care at the Kaiser Pasadena Medical Office Building, was chosen as the Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center's (LAMC) 2008 UNAC/UHCP Nurse of the Year. Each year, the Medical Center presents this award to one UNAC/UHCP nurse and one United Healthcare Workers (UHW) nurse.

For this year's theme, "Nurses: Building a Healthy America," 150 nurses were nominated by their colleagues based on their willingness to work as a team, promotion of Labor Management Partnership principles, and contributions to high quality patient care. The committee responsible for selecting the UNAC/UHCP Nurse of the Year bases its decision on the submitted nomination statements.

UNAC/UHCP's Staff Representative Moises Alarcon, RN, and Kaiser LAMC's Medical Group Administrator, Judy North, presented the award to Luong. As part of the presentation, Alarcon and North read some of the statements Luong's colleagues made on her behalf. Some of the statements included:

- "Kim is a strong leader and a strong clinical nurse who exemplifies all of the KP values. Her style of leadership provides clear direction and guidance to her module team of LVNs, MAs, and a receptionist."
- "Kim is very much focused on the patient care experience and holds her team accountable for their actions, whether it involves on-site patient care, telephone assistance, or miscellaneous requests made by patients in her area."
- "Kim completely fulfills the KP promise of providing 'health care in an easy and convenient manner with a caring, personal touch.'"
- "Kim is never in a rush, and always has a smile on her face."

Luong was nominated by fellow nurses May Torralba and Anna Marie Cloud, as well as by her Department Administrator James Wannares and Assistant Department Administrator, RN Leni Bigornia.



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

RN Kim Luong (center), was presented with Kaiser Los Angeles Medical Center's UNAC/UHCP Nurse of the Year award by Judy North, Medical Group Administrator, and UNAC/UHCP Staff Representative Moises Alarcon



**United Nurses Associations of California/
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955 Overland Court, Suite 150
San Dimas, CA 91773-1718

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A Letter to UNAC



PHOTO BY EVE ROJAS

To My Union,

I want to inform you of my retirement date of 11/28/08. I want to thank you all for your excellent representation on four different occasions. I think this makes me the UNAC poster child, ha ha ha. I think it goes without saying that I am proud of my union!

I am proud of my union's efforts to help me as an individual RN to deliver excellent care to my patients. My union dues have been well spent. UNAC has made it possible for myself and my fellow UNAC members to deliver good health care in a positive and fair environment. I want to especially thank Ken Deitz, MaryAnne Miller, Sue Glen, and Tom Marsh for their special efforts on my behalf.

Thank you for 29 years of service,

Rolee J. Frye, RN

Rolee J. Frye, RN, thanked UNAC/UHCP when she retired in November 2008, although she chose to return as a per diem nurse in February

UNAC/UHCP OFFICES

SAN DIMAS

955 Overland Court, Suite 150
San Dimas, CA 91773-1718
Ph: 909-599-UNAC
That's 909-599-8622
Fax: 909-599-8655

SAN DIEGO

10405 San Diego Mission Rd., Suite 106
San Diego, CA 92108-2173
Ph: 619-280-5401
Fax: 619-280-7406

Email: info@unac-ca.org

Web: www.unac-ca.org

