

Speak Out Now! at Alta Bates 9/31/2018

A Tool to Divide or Unite?

A union can be a tool to protect ourselves from management and make sure a contract is respected. In a hospital there are many different unions - SEIU, CNA, NUHW, and IUOE and each of them has a different contract. The worst thing for us is when management successfully plays one union off against the other. Here's a recent example nearby - stationary engineers at Kaiser just accepted a contract where their pay increase is distributed in a way that Kaiser doesn't have to give equivalent raises to the Nurses. That kind of thing is an example of management using unions as their tool to divide us, not our tool to fight them. Workers shouldn't stand for it.

Experience of (Over)Work

Every year we take a survey about how we are treated at work, called the Experience of Work survey. They give us this survey as if they don't already know what they are doing! We have to work harder because staffing is at a terrible level and people are working to the maximum of their capacities. If management is trying to get the maximum work with the minimum amount of workers, then they should just call it the "Experience of Overwork" survey.

Jumping Ship

The situation with staffing and overwork at Alta Bates is so terrible that many people are considering leaving. For the younger ones, that means looking for work elsewhere. Maybe you get paid a little more at Kaiser, but unfortunately the staffing issues are the same. And those who are reaching the age of retirement, especially nurses, are also leaving because they would hate to stay and be there when something goes wrong, putting a mark on their professional record. What does it say about the hospital, an essential service in the community, if the workers are jumping ship?

Come Talk to Us

6:30AM-8:00AM and 2:30PM-4:00PM

Wednesdays

What Would Happen

If the CEO takes a day off, what happens? Not much. If a manager is out on leave what happens? Not much. But imagine if all the EVS workers called in sick, or the nurses, or anyone else who's doing the important work in the hospital. That would be an interesting experiment, and as scientists we would have to acknowledge the obvious - who does the work around the hospital? The nurses, the techs, EVS, admitting - the workers. That's who really does the work in a hospital.

Understaffing All Around

Understaffing is a system problem up and down the chain of command, not just something management pushes on workers. Look at the position of CNO. There used to be a CNO for Alta Bates and a CNO for Summit, but now there's only one for both. In Women and Infant Services there used to be a two managers and an assistant manager. Now there's just one manager. In the interest of profits, Sutter is squeezing everyone who works there.

History Corner - Sleeping Car Porters Union

Pullman sleeping cars was a company that contracted to run overnight luxury train cars on the railroads in the 1860s, right after the Civil War. They hired black workers because Pullman thought they would act like the slaves they used to be and serve the white passengers. But the workers didn't take it forever. After decades of intense struggle and organizing, in 1935 they formed the Sleeping Car Porters' union, the first majority black union in the U.S.

