

TRUST CRONA TO ACT IN YOUR BEST INTERESTS

On June 4 the hospitals posted a letter on their web site from Greg Souza and Dale Spartz which said:

"Though CRONA continues to suggest the possibility of an impasse (which would allow the Hospitals to implement our proposals), WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING THAT."

Many nurses thought that statement meant what it said--i.e., that the hospitals WOULD NOT UNILATERALLY IMPLEMENT their last, best and final offer.

CRONA was suspicious, however, and had our attorney write to the hospitals' attorney, who is their chief negotiator. Our attorney asked a simple question:

"Is [the] statement a commitment by the hospitals that they will not unilaterally implement all or part of their final offer now or in the future? Yes or no?"

The hospitals' answer to that simple question took 2 paragraphs. First, their attorney said that "the Hospitals are under no obligation to respond" When he finally got to answering the question, he said:

"What the hospitals will do or not do in the future will depend entirely on the facts and circumstances as they develop"

In short, what might have seemed to you to be a promise by the hospitals that they would not UNILATERALLY IMPLEMENT their last, best and final offer, was in fact no such thing, as their lawyer's letter made clear.

If you cannot believe what the hospitals say about implementing their final offer, can you believe what they are telling you about their PNDP proposal? or about their PTO/COBRA proposal?

When it comes to your interests, trust the nurses YOU elected to represent YOU and bargain a new contract on YOUR behalf.

OPEN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER SENT TO LORIE JOHNSON, CRONA PRESIDENT

June 13, 2010

Recently I received a letter from a group of nurses in one unit at SHC. They apparently also sent the letter to the hospitals, and the hospitals posted it on their website.

As we said at our last round of meetings on June 3, CRONA represents 2700 nurses. As would be expected, not all nurses have the same view about the hospitals' last, best and final offer and about what should be done in response to it.

We have encouraged, and continue to encourage, all nurses to share your views with the Negotiating Team, at our meetings, on the units and by email. We respect all of your views and have not criticized the few nurses who, like those who wrote recently, think that we should accept the same offer by the hospitals that you overwhelmingly rejected before. That offer remains the same and, in the view of the Negotiating Team, is very bad in several significant respects that we have discussed with you before.

No nurse will be punished in any way by CRONA for expressing any view. That is why the nurses who wrote to me recently felt comfortable in doing so. They felt comfortable not only in sending their letter to

me, but also in sending it to the hospitals, knowing that the hospitals would post it on their web site in any effort to convince other nurses to accept their final offer. No nurse manager who disagrees with the hospitals' proposal or how the hospitals have behaved during negotiations (and there are managers who do disagree strongly), would dare write a critical letter and send it to CRONA for publication, because they know what the consequences would be for them. The difference is that CRONA is a democratic organization that encourages its members to speak out.

Since the nurses who wrote the letter have made it public, I would like to briefly comment on a few things that they have said in order to get all the facts out to you.

1. Our attorney did not criticize the hospitals for wanting to build new facilities. Rather, he made the point that it is not fair for the hospitals to do so by reducing the nurses' PTO and medical benefits, and by instituting a PNDP that is designed to eventually demote the most experienced nurses at the bedside.
2. The letter states that the hospitals' administrators are simply being "fiscally conservative during difficult times," and that there are "hospitals who are operating in the red." In fact, however, Stanford and Packard last year, during the worst recession in memory, had an OPERATING SURPLUS OF \$147 MILLION.
3. The letter says that nurses who come to work from other parts of the country "are continuously in awe of our good fortune to be nurses here." CRONA agrees that nurses who come from non-union hospitals in low wage parts of the country now enjoy higher wages and benefits here (and also have a much higher cost of living that eats those wages up).

But those higher wages and benefits are not simply "good fortune." They were not handed to us by the hospitals. Rather, they exist because nurses at Stanford and Packard have had CRONA to fight on their behalf to get those wages and benefits, and because CRONA nurses in the past were willing to strike, if need be, to protect what they had. What nurses enjoy today is because of what nurses did in the past for all of us.

4. The letter acknowledges that our nurses "make a little bit less per hour than other nurses in the Bay Area," but then says that nurses outside of California are "appalled by our greed and sense of entitlement," and that we "should be ashamed with ourselves" for wanting more.

As you know, however, CRONA has agreed to the wage increases the hospitals offered. CRONA is NOT SEEKING MORE; rather, it is seeking to PROTECT WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE.

In conclusion, let me say that I appreciate the candid views expressed in the letter, even though I do not agree WITH them. I and all of the other members of the Negotiating Team were elected by YOU to act in what we believe to be YOUR best interest. We have tried to do so, and will continue to do so in the future. Like you, we are bedside nurses who will have to work under any contract that the parties ultimately agree upon.

Thank you for your continued support.

In solidarity,
Lorie Johnson
President
CRONA