

CRONA And Community Members Speak Out!

The CRONA Negotiating Team appreciates all the e-mails we have received regarding the issues that are being discussed. In an effort to facilitate communication the Team wanted to share comments we are receiving from the membership and our community. Every letter is appreciated, but due to space considerations we are not able to print every one in its entirety

7th Edition

“Draconian: an adjective in English that qualifies a rule as being of great severity. It is derived from Draco, an Athenian law scribe under whom small offenses had heavy punishments” (Wikipedia).

It's been said before. It's not just the PNDP that union members should be perusing, but the new managerial discretions afforded administration, specifically the “final written warning” for employee performance transgressions.

Under the old contract at Stanford, the final written warning is removed from one's file after one year, assuming that the employee has not erred again under similar circumstances. The new Stanford contract states that final written warnings stay in your file permanently (as they do at LPCH).

I find it difficult to reconcile the proposed change to the contract (i.e., final written warnings staying in your file permanently) with THE voluminous documentation of accomplishments necessary for advancement under the PNDP - which have to be resubmitted every year vis-à-vis the petitioning packet. I repeat, they are good for one year only.

But mistakes, in the form of final written warnings, can follow a nurse around for the rest of his/her tenure at Stanford and LPCH. That seems inequitable.

Further, with respect to somebody's CN ranking, any written warning, final or otherwise, can have very detrimental consequences. As a CN-IV, a written warning would topple a nurse two ranks down to a CN-II, no questions asked. If the RN made an error that was legitimately written up, then s/he would have to wait two years before s/he could petition for promotion. If the error in question went to grievance, the RN would have to await resolution of the process as a CN-II.

In my mind, that seems harsh for some infractions. There are myriad different transgressions for which an RN could be given a written warning and demoted, with no weight being given to the significance or gravity of an error. For instance, forgetting to document an assessment in the RN to RN Handoff could be viewed in the same light as giving a medication to the wrong patient. Regardless of an RN's clinical standing, his/her tenure would be jeopardized indefinitely by the looming threat posed by these written warnings.

...draconian...

This letter is not easy to write. I have benefitted greatly under present and previous management teams in support and recognition for many projects that I have undertaken during my 15 year tenure at LPCH. For all their support, I am eternally grateful. And I apologize if this letter offends them—I would hope that they not view this letter as a betrayal. But I can't let my gratitude blind me into relinquishing what I see as fundamental protections and fair treatment as a hospital employee.

Given the language of the proposed contract, I fear that my previous accomplishments won't matter a whit, because I make mistakes. Caring for gravely-ill patients whose needs are myriad and sophisticated comes with great risk. I am not abdicating my responsibility to minimize those risks, or shirking accountability. However mistakes are part of the human condition, even for nurses. Such being the case, I suggest that the contract have language that reflects a more compassionate approach to dealing with “written warnings” than it does presently.

The argument could be made that most managers are fair-minded and not vindictive, and that we should trust them to exercise sound judgment when evaluating an employee's actions. Perhaps. I would feel safer if the contract limited management's scope of action

through specific language (e.g., warnings being removed from files after one year; the inclusion specific behaviors that are legitimate grounds for demoting nurses).

I sincerely hope this all ends equitably and amicably.

Rich Ramos, RN

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LPCH

Posted by Ricky, a resident of the Meadow Park neighborhood

As a consumer of Stanford Hospital's services I recognize that most of the care given at the hospital is by registered nurses. They have a tremendous responsibility, especially in a teaching hospital that has residents that are just learning the ropes. I don't want a nurse that has spent a lot of time researching and writing an article for a professional journal. I want an experienced and skilled bedside nurse who has been at Stanford for over 10 years. To the extent that any change in the current contract for nurses does not value that experience and skill, watch out if you are a patient.

The hospitals are clearly using "economic" conditions in the country to attempt to neuter the CRONA union. Their attempt to demote all of the experienced and senior nurses will result in nurses leaving for higher paying jobs. What the article fails to state is the Stanford Hospitals do not pay the highest salaries to nurses in the Bay Area, other hospitals pay more. Highly experienced nurses have no trouble getting jobs as there continues to be a shortage of skilled and experienced nurses.

The hospitals claim that the new criteria for advancement is based on models from other prestigious medical centers is bunk, especially since they failed to mention those that are using such criteria. Beware of claims and assertions with zero information.

The "ball" is in Stanford's court. Negotiate in good faith instead of playing games. If your intent is just to bust the union, then lock out the nurses, clearly the cost to the community and Stanford will be painful. As I recall the nursing strike 10 years ago cost Stanford dearly and administrators were called on the carpet for what happened.

History repeating itself.

(Editor: This email was initially posted on palo alto online and was sent to us by a CRONA Nurse.)

Posted by mel, a resident of Menlo Park

I thought it was the money and I was a little bit worried about the seeming greed in this time and economy. I'm glad I listened to all sides. I do not know about y'all but if this scenario--demotions, morale busting, hiring travellers and scabs that do not know the Hospitals' true population or my loved ones and friends, taking back and denying nurses what are due them,etc--really happens, then the Stanford and Packard we know are no longer. The many times my loved ones and I have sought health care at these Hospitals, the nurses have saved and cared for us like their own. Very smart bunch. One would think the doctors are the true movers of health care here, wrong!!! The nurses are really what the Hospitals call their "Backbone". I would like to see them get taken cared of before the Stanford coffers. The health of a community is only as good as the well-meaning intentions of its health care providers.

COME ON, STANFORD AND PACKARD, PUT YOUT MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS! GO, NURSES, FIGHT FOR WHAT YOU DESERVE: YOUR COMMUNITIES ARE WATCHING.

(Editor: This email was initially posted on palo alto online and was sent to us by a CRONA Nurse.)

Thank you all for your pure bravery.....we need a miracle here.....an outside act of someone way up high! As I was leaving my shift this am and a code began.....the nurses rushed in first...and then everyone else.

We are always there first.

Thank you for your dedication. It is unlikely...but not impossible---- that this can be settled across the table. Whatever happens we will need to support each other....there will be lots of changes no matter which path we are lead down. So far I have seen many staff --- not just nurses---pulling together and helping each other. If we have fostered that kind of behavior then it is worth it.

Still hoping for a miracle!

Thank you . This was a Beautiful powerful responce!!!!

(Editor: Following CRONA's response to the Hospitals comments regarding the overwhelming 90% rejection vote, we received multiple emails (20+) that said pretty much the same as above)

Thank you for representing us. I had no idea, until recently, that the hospital management and their attorneys were trying to dis-empower the union by not being allowed to represent the RNs before their review panel. If this is going to be the common practice, then all workers should be put through the same process (including all levels of management).

I really cannot believe that this organization is trying to achieve and maintain Magnet status while attempting to treat the nurses in this manner. It has been an eye-opening experience. Thank you for continuing to attempt to negotiate with the hospital with the CRONA nurses best interests in mind.

Rock on Crona ! Keep up the good work. I am with you 100%. Thanks for your hard work. You are awesome.

Thank You CRONA Executive Board for all you due for us!!!

Thank you CRONA Negotiating Team!!!!

Thank you CRONA Negotiation Committee!!!

Thank you CRONA Nurses for sticking together!!!!!!!!!!!!

Now the work will begin with hopefully the Hospital realizing that they cannot break the CRONA Union! I sure hope that the Hospital will begin to bargain in good faith like in years past!

Posted by Gary, a resident of another community

I am a scab from Texas and will be coming out if you do strike. Even though I will be taking care of your patients I truly hope that the nurses there get a contract that is fair and rewards all of you for all the hell that you have to go through during the negotiation process. May god bless and keep each of you and my hope is that we can give your patients the care they deserve.

(Editor: This email was initially posted on palo alto online and was sent to us by a CRONA Nurse.)

If you have any question, comments or concerns, please speak to one of your area representatives, or email CRONA at CRONA@CRONA.org, or call the CRONA office.

Stay Informed about the latest developments and details of the ongoing contract negotiations at: www.crona.org or www.cronafacts.com

Also you can follow negotiation on Twitter. Go to www.twitter.com and begin following CRONANURSE. A direct link is available on the CRONA Facts website.
