



*RNs alert the media to understaffing by picketing in front of hospital.*

# OUR UNION BENEFITS US EVERYDAY!

A short history of the National Nurses Organizing Committee at St. Louis University Hospital



**A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Healthcare.**



*PPC insists that management follow the contract on staffing.*



*Behavioral Health Unit demands safety on the job.*

## How the Union Works at SLUH

### CHIEF NURSE REP AND NURSE REP COUNCIL

#### RESPONSIBILITY

Chief Nurse Rep leads the union's efforts to enforce the contract.

Nurse Rep Council (NRC) organizes members to win improvements and enforce the contract.

#### HOW FORMED

The Nurse Rep Council is made up of nurse reps from each department.

Union members elect Chief Nurse Rep and approve all Nurse Reps.

#### CURRENT LEADERSHIP

Chief Nurse Rep  
Marchelle Vernell, 6 ICU

### PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE

#### RESPONSIBILITY

Professional Practice Committee meets with CNO on nurse practice issues like patient care, safe staffing, safety and health conditions, and the patient classification system.

#### HOW FORMED

PPC made up of five elected members:

- Appoints four RNs to serve on Staffing Committee
- Appoints RNs to SLUH Safe Patient Handling Committee and Infection Prevention Committee

#### CURRENT LEADERSHIP

PPC Chair  
Jay Coomer, PACU

### FACILITY BARGAINING TEAM AND COUNCIL

#### RESPONSIBILITY

The Facility Bargaining Team and Council is made up of RNs across the hospital who negotiate and build support for winning big improvements during contract bargaining.

#### HOW FORMED

Four RNs elected every three years to negotiate contract.

Union members elect members of the Facility Bargaining Team.

After years of understaffing, disrespect, and cutbacks to wages and benefits, in 2013 RNs at SLUH organized a union with the National Nurses Organizing Committee.

**RNs wanted a voice at SLUH to:**

- Improve patient care and staffing
- Protect and improve working conditions
- Fight for fair compensation and benefits

Since 2013, our union of nurses has made great improvements at SLUH.



Before the Union	Four Years Later
Previous raises didn't occur yearly (every 15 or 16 months was common) and the amount was not guaranteed.	Yearly raises. Latest three-year increases between 7.5% - 26%.
Often, RNs doing the same job were hired at very different hourly rates.	Establishes minimums to prevent low pay. New step increases reward RN for years of experience.
Senior RNs received bonuses instead of raises.	Across-the-board wage increases.
Holiday pay was \$2 per hour.	Holiday pay is time-and-a-half.
In 2014, non-union employees lost healthcare PPO and EPO plan.	Union RNs keep all three healthcare options.
Over 10 years, SLUH's contribution to the 403(b) retirement plan was reduced from 5% to 1.5%.	403(b) employer contribution moving in the right direction again. Now 2.5%.
No guaranteed breaks or lunches.	Breaks and lunches guaranteed by contract.
SLUH cut PTO time for new employees from seven hours per pay period to four hours per pay period.	PTO restored to seven hours per pay period.
Transfer depended on approval of manager.	Your right to transfer guaranteed by seniority.
RNs were "at-will" employees and could be fired for almost anything. People were afraid to speak out.	Union RNs advocate for safe staffing and better conditions without fear of losing their job.
Sale of the hospital could lead to any changes in wages or benefits that the new employer wants.	Successor clause protected all wages and benefits during sale from Tenet to SSM and for any future sale.
Discipline determined by manager.	Grievance procedure allows an RN to object to unfair discipline.
RNs asked to work through the night on-call and then do their regular shift the next day.	Guarantee of eight hours rest between shifts.



*Nurse Reps volunteer for a day of training to learn to represent their co-workers on the job.*

## How Our Union Fights for Better Staffing

### Before we were unionized:

Staffing was determined solely by management who didn't need to listen to RNs' concerns about patient care.

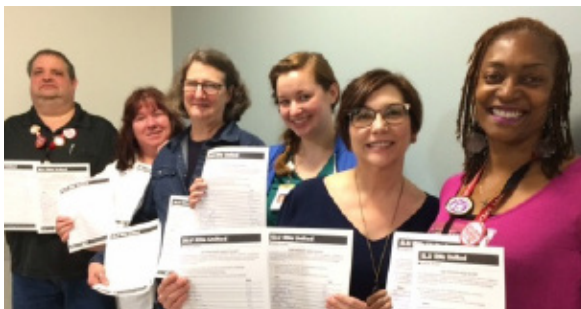
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### Now:

- » In our 2016 contract, the union won guarantees that management will make "all reasonable efforts" to staff adequately, including using PRN, agency, on-call, and overtime.
  - » RNs have the right to speak out about unsafe work assignments, understaffing, or unsafe equipment without fear of retribution or punishment.
  - » RNs have the right to tell their manager that they feel a work assignment is unsafe and then fill out an Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) form — transferring liability to the hospital's license.
  - » Nurses elect a union Professional Practice Committee (PPC) to review incidents of unsafe staffing, equipment failure, or other medical or professional problems. The PPC meets with the CNO regularly to raise these concerns.
  - » The Staffing Committee of the PPC meets regularly to study staffing at the hospital and issue reports on problems or improvements in staffing.
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Our union guarantees that management can't change wages, benefits, or working conditions without bargaining.

**Think about it: what changes would your manager try to make if there were no union at SLUH?**



*RNs petition for better food on the floors.*