



UNION NURSE



NATIONAL NURSES ORGANIZING COMMITTEE-TEXAS • NATIONAL NURSES UNITED
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NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW

The “Equality Rule” provides real protection for nurse reps (NRs) when acting as a representative of the union: Effective representation and contract enforcement requires active NRs and knowledgeable members. Under the “Equality Rule,” a nurse serving as a nurse rep is the legal equal to the managers, when doing her job as the nurse rep not when acting as an individual employee. By NNOC union contracts with both Tenet and HCA-affiliated hospitals, management recognizes the nurse reps as enforcers of the contract and representatives of the nurses.

NRs are expected to forcefully advocate including openly disagreeing, vigorously arguing, questioning management, and demanding certain actions of management—all without risking discipline. Of course, threats, name-calling, profanity and personal attacks are always uncalled for, and are not protected by law.

Article 36 in HCA-affiliated contracts protects current PTO and EIB benefits: Although the corporation is implementing a substitute “Time Away from Work” program, it must abide by the contract. Therefore, PTO for current employees remains unchanged. And, switching from EIB to the new Short-Term Disability (STD) plan **CANNOT result in significant loss of benefits.** The issue before us is to make sure through collective bargaining that there will be no losses when RNs begin to use the new program.

SIERRA TENET NURSES OPEN FIRST CONTRACT BARGAINING

**Providence and Cypress Fairbanks Nurses Join in National Day of Action;
Florida Medical Center Nurses Win First Contract with Annual Wages, Wage Grid, and PPC**



Committee members along with some NRs opened bargaining with the seven principles of safe patient care and proposals for expanded rights for RNs. The committee reports that some progress was made over two days of bargaining.



The Florida Medical nurses' picket line on March 11. Their contract was settled on March 14, and members will vote on it March 24-25.



In coordinated actions across four states on March 11, Providence nurses (left) held an evening vigil in support of collective bargaining rights while several hundred St. Louis Tenet nurses (right) picketed in support of their contract negotiations.

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REPORTS FROM THE SHERIFFS



Cypress Fairbanks nurse reps and PPC report two good developments: new staffing matrices, as requested by the union, have been received and will be posted in all nursing units. Members are urged to use ADOs to force compliance with the matrices. Also at Cypress, after much discussion with management, nursery staffing has been agreed to no more than six healthy babies to a nurse.

Las Palmas reps report a good grievance settlement on management's attempt to eliminate a mileage reimbursement for nurses living more than 40 miles one way from work. Three nurses were affected. The union won over \$32,000 in additional mileage benefits. "For those who say they don't see the union making a difference, take a look at our case," noted ER nurse Dominic Cardon, one of the grievants. "It feels good to know that the grievance process works," said Juan Anchondo, the NR who handled the grievance.

DEADLINES FOR RN ACTIONS

- **April 25 NNOC-Texas state meeting in El Paso.** Delegates (three from each facility and Metro; El Paso may send additional) should be registered by **April 11**. Suggestions for state action from leadership councils are also due by **April 11**.
- **By April 25, contact your state reps by phone, letter, or visit to support H.B. 1829 (NNOC's Safe Patient Handling bill) and H.B. 2880 (our ratios and rights bill).** Both bills have been sent to the Human Services Committee, and it is possible that the bills will receive a hearing in this session.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Corpus Christi MC: April 9 • PPC at 8:30 a.m. and Leadership Council at 4:00 p.m.

Cypress Fairbanks MC: April 5 • Leadership Council and PPC (this is the rescheduled March meeting due to Easter weekend) | **April 24** • Quarterly staffing committee | **April 26** • Leadership Council and PPC

Del Sol MC: April 10 • Leadership Council followed by a membership meeting

Las Palmas MC: April 16 • Leadership Council followed by a membership meeting

Providence Memorial: April 24 and 25 • Contract negotiations

Sierra MC: April 8, 9, and 10 • PPC | **April 20** • Leadership Council

Valley Regional MC: April 2 • PPC | **April 20** • Leadership Council

SOME TEXAS HISTORY TO KNOW

WHO WAS HUMBERTO SILEX AND WHY DID HE FACE DEPORTATION?

In 1939, Humberto Silex and J.B. Chavez led organizing drives in El Paso at American Smelting and Refining and at Phelps Dodge, calling on workers to join the Mine, Mill, Smelter Union in the US and the Confederacion de Trabajadores in Mexico. The 1,100 workers were mostly Tejanos and Mexican nationals, paid ten cents an hour with no benefits and working six-day weeks. Most lived in slums and were victimized by shakedowns, deductions, and company stores. Smelter management fired union supporters and worked closely with El Paso County Sheriff Chris Fox, who often deported union workers.

The union won NLRB elections in 1942-43 and ended discriminatory practices in the smelter industry. In 1946 both managements refused to negotiate new contracts and a three month strike resulted. During the strike the US tried but failed to deport Humberto Silex, a Nicaraguan. The strike was won and the El Paso smelters agreed to a minimum hourly raise of 18 and a half cents an hour, almost completely erasing the gap between the previously lower paid El Paso workers compared to national wage rates.