

FACT SHEET

Contract Negotiations between SEIU Healthcare 1199NW & Providence Hospice and Home Care of Snohomish County



Overview

On April 6, 2016, the 225 registered nurses, chaplains, nurse assistants, physical therapists and social workers at Providence Hospice and Homecare of Snohomish County (PHHSC) voted overwhelmingly to join SEIU Healthcare 1199NW. Caregivers wanted improved staffing levels and reduced patient loads so they could provide the highest quality, personalized care; a voice in scheduling and working conditions; and fair wages and benefits that would recruit and retain qualified staff.

Contract negotiations began September 5, 2016 but Providence executives refused to bargain in good faith for more than a year, leading healthcare workers to vote for and carry out an Unfair Labor Practice strike December 6-8, 2017. A year later, Providence has still refused to bargain in good faith and settle a fair union contract, so caregivers must again consider a strike as Providence has left them no other option.

Current status of contract negotiations

Nurses and healthcare workers are seeking improvements in four main areas:

- **Manageable patient loads** so that they can give each hospice and homecare patient the time, focus and dignity they deserve when they are most vulnerable. Right now, healthcare workers are often under pressure to rush from one patient to the next.
- **A voice in improving patient care**, including adequate supplies. For example, caregivers have been limited to one pack of patient wipes a week, and have been required to use cheap, ineffective bandages, medications and incontinence aids.
- **A voice in scheduling** and a rational system so workers can be there for their families. Providence has been denying paid time off and assigning mandatory extra shifts and overtime. This has led to hardships for nurses and caregivers, including one single mom who was prevented from seeing her child off to college.
- **A fair, transparent, equitable pay scale** that rewards experience and recruits and retains qualified staff. There is no pay scale in place right now, leading to inequitable wages and an alarming turnover rate¹.

Providence is extremely healthy financially

Providence St. Joseph Health is extremely healthy financially, and can afford to make the reasonable improvements that caregivers need. Instead, Providence is prioritizing executive pay, profits and expansion at the expense of patient care. In 2017, the latest year that data are available, Providence had:

- A CEO, Rod Hochman, whose compensation skyrocketed 157% to over \$10.5 million.²

¹ 74 SEIU 1199NW bargaining unit members worked at Providence Hospice and Homecare of Snohomish County in 2017 but not in 2018. After adjusting for a 4% increase in the bargaining unit from '17 to '18, PHHSC has a turnover rate of 30% (74/249) from 2017 to 2018.

² IRS Form 990, Schedule J

- 15 top executives with total compensation of \$41 million³.
- Explosive annual revenue growth, from \$14 billion in 2012 to \$23 billion in 2017⁴.
- \$780 million in profits and \$11.3 billion in cash reserves⁵.
- Two \$150 million for-profit venture capital funds⁶.
- Almost 1,000 facilities in seven states, including 50 hospitals and 860 outpatient sites⁷.

Workers seek the same standards Providence has agreed to elsewhere

The improvements in staffing, scheduling and wages that PHHSC workers are asking for are common standards that have already been in place for many years throughout the Providence system. Providence has agreed to similar standards at Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice which covers Mason, Lewis and Thurston counties, and in contracts covering 9,000 other Providence workers throughout Washington State. But Providence refuses to agree to the same standards for Snohomish County patients and working families.

Refusing to settle a first contract is a common union-busting tactic

It is a common tactic by employers to stall for years on negotiating a first contract after workers vote to form a union, so that employees' efforts can be defeated through turnover, burnout and demoralization. By refusing to bargain in good faith, Providence has adopted one of the most effective union busting tactics available to it, showing an entrenched ideological opposition to healthcare workers having a union voice to improve their jobs and the care they provide. The federal government has charged Providence Snohomish multiply times with violations of federal law which requires good faith bargaining. Yet each time, Providence simply settles the government's charges without changing its union-busting tactics.

Snohomish County patients and working families are suffering

Providence Hospice and Home Care patients can suffer long waits to receive the vital care they need, and sometimes face a rotating list of unfamiliar caregivers who are rushing to their next appointment. Patients in our community deserve the dignity of knowing they are being thoroughly listened to and cared for in their hour of need. The 225 nurses and healthcare workers of PHHSC are struggling with overwhelming caseloads, unpredictable scheduling, unfair wages, demoralization, turnover and burnout. They seek a fair contract that will benefit their families and their patients.

Providence Has Lost Its Way public information campaign

Providence Hospice and Home Care workers have launched Providence Has Lost Its Way, a public information campaign calling on executives to return to the original core values of Compassion, Dignity, Justice, Excellence and Integrity. Nurses and caregivers want to move Providence in a new direction, away from hostility and toward communication and cooperation. More information is available at ProvidenceHasLostItsWay.org.

³ IRS Form 990, Schedule J

⁴ Providence St. Joseph Health Audited Financial Statement 2017

⁵ Providence St. Joseph Health Audited Financial Statement 2017

⁶ Providence Ventures press release by Providence Health and Services on September 16, 2014: <http://www.providenceventures.org/in-the-news/2015/6/29/providence-launches-150-million-venture-capital-fund>

⁷ Providence St. Joseph Health Audited Financial Statement 2017