

ENVISION

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OUR PURPOSE IS TO EDUCATE, ENCOURAGE AND ENERGIZE ENLOE EMPLOYEES. *ENVISION* WILL SHOW UP BIWEEKLY. *SEIU-UHW...ENLOE*

Unit secretaries may be the busiest people at Enloe, still they're...

Overworked and underpaid

Imagine yourself trying to process orders off a chart while the phones are ringing, patient call lights are going off, doctors, nurses, the charge nurse, and patient family members all asking questions

What would *you* do in all this confusion? Welcome to the world of unit secretaries.



Unit secretaries must deal with this kind of confusion all the time. And that's not the half of it. Besides processing orders they must also schedule labs, x-rays, EKGs, EGDs, colonoscopies, bronchoscopies with the GI laboratory, and assist whomever else might need help in their departments.

Quite often they get swamped. They are amongst the hardest workers at Enloe's facilities, so you'd think they'd be amongst the best paid. Not so. They are amongst the lowest.

They are the pulse of the floor; the heart beat of the units. They make Enloe work. Even a little respect would go a long way. But they say they don't even feel that much from Enloe's senior management.

What they do feel is that they are not treated with fairness and

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Every advance in this half-century – Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after another – came with the support and leadership of American Labor.

– JIMMY CARTER

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respect, and that they are not given a safe staffing ratio.

Unit secretaries get floated to other floors. They are told to sit with patients so the patients won't yank out their lines or crawl out of bed. As one secretary said, "We are not trained CNAs or sitters."

You're on your own

When unit secretaries arrive at work, they may be hit with 9 or 10 admits. The unit fills up, and when they call for help they are told there *is* no help. They're told to "just do the best you can." They are left to fend for themselves.

"In all the confusion, you are likely to miss something, get a nasty note and get written up," said another secretary. "You don't get bathroom breaks or lunch due to this understaffing and then you get reprimanded. But what do you do? There is no replacement to relieve you."

It's well known that in the workplace most people will do the best job they are capable of. When they are overworked they become frustrated, and often blame their coworkers instead of blaming a poorly managed system and those who are responsible for fixing that system. This looking-for-mistakes in coworkers breeds low morale. However, many of Enloe's unit secretaries have coworkers who are supportive, and this, they say, helps them get through the day.

Enloe is advertised as being the premier patient care provider in the north state. Perhaps it can also become the premier employee care provider. **E**

What do unit secretaries really want?

- a senior management who would truly listen to them and respect their opinions
- some positive feedback once in awhile
- adequate staffing: instead of a ratio of one unit secretary per 32 patients, a ratio of one secretary per 25 to 28 patients *with* the availability of a floating secretary
- employee management committees to talk out issues
- job security
- the same kind of insurance coverage as the nurses received in their new contract with 25,000 dollars for medical expenses after retirement with 25 years of service, or as Enloe's Compass employees received with renegotiations if insurance rates jump over 15%.
- bargaining for a fair contract as ordered by the NLRB with their cease and desist order that should have been posted in the hospital according to the law

Unit secretaries really want to be the best they can be, while getting the kind of fair wages and benefits unit secretaries get up in Redding. Come oooooon! Is that too much to ask?

Though it's illegal...

Several unit secretaries were interviewed for this article, but to a person not one of them felt secure enough to have their name mentioned in the article. *FEAR*. Too often, those who have spoken out and have been identified, have been intimidated in one fashion or another by...well, we think you know who.

It's against the law for ANYONE to try to stop workers from organizing themselves, striking to improve their work situations, or simply speaking their minds. But creative union-busting techniques are constantly being tried out. "We'll have to see if there is a pattern," one senior administrator said as a "union troublemaker's" work record was brought under close scrutiny. If you feel you're being 'patterned,' contact us.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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FYI

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Those annual 46% pay raises...sweet!

According to the *Wall St. Journal*, CEO pay was 35 times that of the average worker's in that same CEO's company in 1978. The ratio grew to 71 times by 1989. It surged to 300 times by 2000. We're lucky at Enloe. Our over-a-half-million-dollars-a-year Chief Enloe Officer is paid a mere 24 times the pay of his average subordinate officer. So, our CEO only needs to work one day to equal his subordinate's 24 days. I wonder if that means he works 24 times harder...?

The shape of OUR future?

"Some of the fastest growing American corporations are the ones that – as they put in the business press – sell workers. So Man Power Incorporated is just booming. And the reason for the turn to temporary workers is perfectly straight forward. They can be treated just as goods, as material goods. If you want to throw them out, you throw them out. You don't want to pay them benefits, you don't pay them benefits."

– Noam Chomsky

ENVISION OPINION

What are we doing?

Does anyone remember why labor unions came to be in the first place? Unions rose up because the people who performed the actual *labor* were being financially exploited and personally – even physically – abused by their bosses.

- They were forced to work as often and as unceasingly as their employer demanded or risk losing their jobs altogether. They didn't have weekends off.
- Because of the greed of their employers and their refusal to pay a worker a just wage, they lived in poverty with no hope for anything like what we call "retirement."
- They were required to take unreasonable risks, oftentimes even risking their very lives, to achieve the end desired by the man who signed their paycheck.

They formed unions because it was the only way they could force their employers to treat them fairly.

In a perfect world unions would be unnecessary. Employers would treat their employees as they themselves would want to be treated. But this is not a perfect world.

Reflect for a moment about the recent coal-mine disasters and the plight of those miners and their families. It's not too far a stretch to say the American healthcare industry is now on its way down a similar slippery slope.

All across this country, healthcare workers are organizing. It's what they **MUST** do to ensure working conditions that are safe for themselves and for their patients.

The busy-ness of our lives keeps many of us from participating in the democratic process we have been blessed with in this country. The NLRB has declared that we **ARE** a union. It is incumbent upon us, then, to get out of our chairs and stand up for our rights *together*, because only *together* can we make a difference for our patients *and* our families. **Many hands make short work.**

THE CALO COMMENTARY

Somebody needs a time out...!

Enloe's Administration is thumbing their noses at the National Labor Relations Board childishly trying to get their own way.



Some of these same administrators are sucking down generous wages higher than those of State University presidents, and this at a non-profit hospital! We have been told our CEO's salary is "appropriate and in line." In line with what? Following the

NLRB order is to bargain with the service unit's legally certified union is what's "in line."

Enloe's senior management has been told three times that their objections to our union's election are groundless, but like a spoiled child they refuse to budge. I think a time out is in order...at the bargaining table.

Dan, we need to talk...

How can we get our Sr. Mgmt. to the bargaining table? By uniting together and standing firm. You don't get anything unless you fight for it. Compass employees fought and so did our RNs. They did so with a strike and threats of a strike.

Let's not be afraid they'll fire us. They can't fire someone for organizing, protesting, or going on strike. It's against the law!

You say you don't need a union, you can do things for yourself? When's the last time you, yourself, bargained for job security, patient safety, staffing issues, or a 22% pay raise?

You say you don't like those 2% union dues? Compass employees now pay those dues, but they'll get raises totalling 22% over three years! The RNs pay those dues, and they'll get an 18% raise over the next three years! PLUS...both groups have job security. They can't be fired without going through a grievance process.

What does the non-union part of Enloe have? The rest of us have neither job security or guaranteed pay raises. From the service unit to the business office unit to the technical unit to the security guards to lower and middle management, we are totally dependent on the whims of those mega-salaried senior administrators.

•PC•

Please take the time to fill out the form attached to this newsletter, then give it to a dept. rep (or e-mail or call us). Tell us how YOU can pitch in. As we work together, OUR voice will be heard in this community and we will *insist* that Sr. Mgmt. sit down at the bargaining table with us, just as they have done with the nurses' union. **WE are not going away.**

ENVISION CONTACTS: SEIU-UHW...CHICO • PHONE: 624-4256 • EMAIL: Info@EnloeWatch.org • OR YOUR UNION DEPT. REP
VISIT THESE WEBSITES: www.enloewatch.org AND www.enlomedicen.org
ENVISION STAFF: BEN CALO • BARBARA GARCIA • JIM NORTH • ALICE RYAN

Uncovered...unveiled...uncensored...

Chico to get another hospital?

How many times have you heard this discussion take place in your department?

Worker Jane says, "I support a union because I want better working conditions, and better pay and benefits." And worker John says, "If you don't like what you've got here, then get another job?"

What is worker Jane to do? She probably has already invested a large chunk of her life in her job at Enloe, likes helping people by working in a hospital, may be living from paycheck to paycheck, and might even be a single mom with little ones. How is she going to find the time needed to hunt for another hospital to work at?

Well...if the Infection Connection folks have their way, worker Jane may soon be able to take worker John's suggestion and get that job at Chico's *new* hospital.

The Infection Connection is a newly formed group here in Chico who claim they – or a family member – have picked up an infection during a stay at our hospital. Enloe senior management discounts their claims, saying they, or *their* hospital-stay visitors, brought in the infections.

All hundred, or so, members in the group

insist they got an infection in Enloe. About 10% of them have a family member who died because of their infection.

Don't blame us!

The group invited Enloe Sr. Mgmt. to a meeting last August, expecting a little understanding of their issues. Instead they were told the hospital was not responsible. During the meeting, according to Ann Marie Robinson, a founder of the group, there was a very heated argument between a doctor from Vaccaville who supports the group, and a doctor brought by our Sr. Mgmt. "They were yelling at each other across the room," she said.



Ann Marie Robinson

Hospital infection rates are rising dramatically across the country; not just at Enloe. "The difference is that other hospitals admit it and Enloe denies a problem exists," Robinson said. She admits Enloe is now addressing its infection problem, but it's Sr. Mgmt.'s arrogant refusal to openly admit to these problems that has driven the group in its efforts to get another hospital in Chico.

With several hundred signatures already on their "New Hospital in Chico" petitions, and many petitions still outstanding, the group hopes to convince our local governments that there is enough support in the area to invite another hospital to set up shop.

Enloe's Sr. Mgmt. claims there isn't enough need here for another hospital. "Chico Community Hospital had about the same number of beds the expansion will provide," said Robinson. "Chico had two hospitals for years, until Enloe bought out Community and then *closed* it!"

At one of the group's recent meetings, Richard Narad, a Chico State professor in Health Services Administration, disagreed with Enloe's Sr. Mgmt., saying there was a definite need for another hospital and the competition it would provide.

Worker Jane, perhaps your next job *will* be a better paying *union* job. **E**

What patients think of north state hospitals

Excerpt from the California HealthCare Foundation website

<http://www.calhospitalcompare.org/>

PATIENT VIEWPOINT <i>[from 9/2004]</i>	Rating of hospital	Safe medical practices	Overall hospital performance
Enloe Medical Center	Below Avg.	Average	Average
Feather River Hospital	Average	Average	Above Avg.
Mercy M.C.-Mt.Shasta	Average	Average	Above Avg.
Northbay Med. Cen.	Average	Above Avg.	Average
Seneca Healthcare Dist.	Average	Average	Average
Shasta Regional M.C.	Average	Above Avg.	Above Avg.

This is part of the 'Notice to Employees' that our administration was told to post in the hospital after the NLRB ruled against them:

The National Labor Relations Board has found that we violated Federal labor law and has ordered us to post and obey this notice:

WE WILL NOT refuse to bargain with SEIU, United Healthcare Workers-West as the exclusive bargaining representative of the employees...

WE WILL NOT...interfere with, restrain, or coerce you in the exercise of the rights guaranteed you by Section 7 of the Act.

WE WILL... bargain with the Union and put in writing and sign any agreement reached on terms and conditions of employment for our employees...