

ENVISION

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

Though you may be an outstanding employee, what can you do when your boss says...

You're fired!

A rational person might think, that if you are good at your job, you will not be fired from it. Right? It can't happen at Enloe? Well, it did happen, and it happened to Joe Sivalingam.

Joe is a phlebotomist, and a decorated marine veteran. His country has given him not only five medals – including one for Good Conduct – but also 15 ribbons. While on combat duty in East Timor, he received a Humanitarian Award. While stationed at Camp Pendleton, he had five corpsmen under him. They were responsible for the care of 300 men. With this much experience, you'd think Enloe would hold on to someone like Joe.

Joe started at Enloe in November 2005. He did one 30-day probationary period, then another, and then still another. He thought he was doing his usual good work, when, shortly after his "90-day probationary" period, he was called into his supervisor's office.

"When I got called into the office, I thought I might be sent across the street to the lab. My supervisor knew how much I wanted to focus on lab work and microbiology, so I thought I might be sent to the lab." But instead, Joe was given his pink slip.

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All that serves labor serves the nation. All that harms is treason. If a man tells you he trusts America, yet fears labor, he is a fool. There is no America without labor, and to fleece one is to rob the other.

– ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Getting axed caught Joe totally off guard. "I had no idea. I was blindsided. No counseling; never written up."

According to Joe, the reasons given by his supervisor for the termination, were totally false: listening to his iPod during work time, and not making his "draw time."

None of the official charges against him can be proven. He feels he was fired on hearsay. "It is their word against mine." Joe denies ever listening to his iPod during work time. And this thing called "draw time"?

Slam, bam, thank you...for your blood

"When they released me, they said I wasn't making my draw time." [Draw time is the allotted time the lab gives you to go into the room where the patient awaits, introduce yourself, draw his blood, and leave.] "I asked them, 'Was I ever timed on my draw time?' and my supervisor said I wasn't. I know I've been making my draw time, because I draw faster than most of the people there."

Draw time might be good for the administration's bottom line, but is it good for patient care? Our lab expects no more than a five-minute draw time.

"This is the only place I have worked that had a draw time. It takes away from patient care and patient contact. They want you to go in there, 'Hi, I'm Joe from the lab. I'm here to draw you.' Boom and you're outta there. That's why they have a high exposure rate where people are sticking themselves. They want that speed, and so they don't pay enough attention to safety."

According to Joe, Feather River Hospital hasn't had an exposure for two years; Enloe gets one approximately once a week hospital-wide. Even the experienced phlebotomists get stuck because of the speed that is expected of them.

A labor contract, gives you...

Protection

Though Enloe Sr. Mgmt. thinks they can fire whomever they'd like, our coworkers who work for Compass, and the unionized workers up in Redding, have more protection than we, thanks to a negotiated labor contract.

Among the protections is the use of a system of progressive discipline:

- 1st – Verbal warning
- 2nd – Written warning
- 3rd – Final written warning
- 4th – Suspension pending investigation (with the option of union representation).

If they believe they are being terminated unfairly, without just cause, then the employee can take the dispute all the way to binding arbitration by a neutral third party.

Final dismissal may, or may not, occur. Protection's good!

The real reason...control

If this all sounds bogus to you, you'd be right. You see, the real reason Joe was fired, was because he was practicing that part of his first amendment rights which our senior management is against. He talked about union stuff, and certain coworkers turned him in.

Joe isn't the first to get fired for "crazy union talk," and he won't be the last. Getting fired for supporting a union IS illegal. If Joe can prove to the National Labor Relations Board that he was fired for his support of our union, he'll get back pay from the time he was fired. Unfortunately, that money doesn't come out of the wallets of the Sr. Mgmt. that is responsible for firing him. Sr. Mgmt. rarely gets punished for its bad decisions.

Why is Sr. Mgmt. so afraid of unions? Let's face it, administration types want to be in control: control of the decision-making; control of the money-making. Handing out pink slips is just one part of Sr. Mgmt.'s overall strategic plan for keeping control. Unions don't take away that control, but they do expect Sr.

Mgmt. to take care of its employees. Unions give regular workers a way to participate in the disbursement of the money they help an enterprise earn.

Right after Joe was fired, both Oroville Hospital and Feather River Hospital tried to recruit him. He chose Feather River. "Where I work now, it's fun. I get to do microbiology. I'd go back to Enloe, at least per diem, because my friends work there." **E**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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FYI

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One step forward, and two steps backward...

You've got to wonder why the rest of the developed world seems to understand the value of unions, but America doesn't.

See this web site, a FREE online encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Unions:_International_comparisons#ref_WSJ

Even at their zenith in the mid-1950s – when unions were helping our parents and grandparents fulfill the American dream by allowing them to become middle class – the United States labor force was only 36% unionized, lower than in almost all comparable countries. By 1989 that figure had dropped to about 16%. We are going backward!

For comparison, here are some unionization percentages for other developed democracies, published in 1990:

- 95% in Sweden
- 95% in Denmark
- 85% in Finland
- Over 60% in Norway
- Over 60% in Austria
- Over 50% in Australia
- Over 50% in Ireland
- Over 50% in United Kingdom
- Over 40% in West Germany

ENVISION OPINION

What are you trying to hide?

From fighting the nurses over bulletin boards, to the February 2006 DMS Newsletter ordering employees to not comment to the media, to the criticism restrictions on our anesthesiologists, and now to getting the doctors not to make public comments about the "issue," our senior management and our Board of Trustees have a habit of not being open with their employees or their community. In a democracy, and with a community hospital, we think they should.

Let's take a closer look at an excerpt of a letter sent to our medical staff by Betty Dean, the chair of the new Board of Trustees. We have taken the liberty to change it to what we believe it should have said.

"The Board has concluded that it is ITS responsibility to provide the leadership at this critical time....The Board of Trustees is aware of the pain that ~~this issue~~ [our senior management and the ever-complicit Board] has inflicted on our organization and its employees. We are also



LET'S KEEP THE PUBLIC IN THE DARK

Chair of the NeuBOTs

cognizant of the ~~damaging~~ [powerful] effect on the trust of our patients [and the community] that the [knowledge] recent[ly made public] publicity has created and therefore ask that we all work diligently ~~within~~ [to open up] the system [in order] to resolve our issues [with real employee and community input]. ~~Confidentiality~~ [Transparency] and hard work will provide us all with a stronger, more ~~responsible~~ [responsive] medical center."

THE CALO COMMENTARY

Who do you trust?

Is Enloe's administration and Board of Directors expanding Enloe Hospital for the right reason, or are they trying to leave a legacy that puts progress above the needs of patients, employees and the community?

You can talk old women out of their homes, fast talk the people living in the neighborhood, get carte blanche for expansion from our city council, over work and under staff employees stretched to the limit, while all the time giving bricks and mortar more importance than flesh and bone.

We understand the need to enlarge and modernize our emergency and maternity departments, increase the beds in our intensive care units, and rebuild our operating rooms. But, does Li Poa *really* need all those beds in Dan's tower?

We wonder if the tower will be built from funds saved by under-staffing and under-paying our employees? Will Dan and the board save money at the expense of patient and employee care?

How far is far enough?

You can attract all the top-notch staff in the world, but they need fair treatment if you want to keep them. Our senior management has had the knack of alienating more than one group or another, and lately it has come to a head.

Cafeteria workers, housekeepers, the service unit, our nurses, and now even our doctors have all been made to feel expendable and irrelevant. To Sr. Mgmt., we employees are an expensive problem that they solve by outsourcing us, laying us off, forcing us to quit, or even firing us. In their strategy to reduce this costly "expense," they have adopted adversarial and dismissive attitudes, and stalling tactics, forcing us to organize and speak out. They have created an atmosphere of distrust.

Instead of fighting each other, we should all be working together to make our medical center environment caring, safe and healthy for the community that passes through our doors, either as patients or as employees.

The treatment we employees receive from Sr. Mgmt. is insufferable. However, our outsourced Compass workers would not remain quiet. Our nurses and doctors would not be taken for granted. And our service unit will not be tricked out of a union by high-priced consultants. It's time to trust yourself and your fellow-workers, and change our Enloe. **•PC•**

Please take the time to fill out the form inserted in this newsletter, then get it to us by: giving it to a department rep; mailing it to us (see address below); or e-mail or call us, and we'll pick it up at your leisure. Please involve yourself in any way you feel comfortable. Let's work together for the whole Enloe community. **WE are not going away.**

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

Dan's reception, a huge success!

It was an idea whose time had come. At a union get-together about a month ago, somebody flippantly thought out loud, that Dan's picture should grace a T-shirt. We giggled. Another suggested adding the words "No Confidence." We chuckled. Then, "How 'bout one of those circles with a slash through it?" We laughed and snorted. We were giddy. The kind of giddiness that gets you to do the implausible, even the unthinkable.

We would try to get a few – maybe ten – of the hundreds of "disgruntled" Enloe employees to show up at Dan's June 2nd reception wearing T-shirts that said what all of us felt.

The T-shirts would say the same powerful message that our doctors declared 31 to 1 on Dr. Doug Benson's web site, and 8 to 1 at the doctors' emergency staff meeting a couple of weeks ago. Little did we know, at the time, how widespread a sentiment it was, not only for Dan but for most of the Board of Trustees, as well.

Not just ten, but at least 50 of us "disgruntleds" showed up in the front of

the Esplanade Building, including five doctors. Out of the 139 T-shirts printed, at least 40 of them showed up at the

Speak softly, but wear a loud T-shirt



Four of the speakers who spoke at the June 2nd reception (in foreground, left to right): Randall Stone, Dr. Diane Gill, Barbara Garcia (speaking) and James Harro.

reception. And this *only* with Dan's image on the shirts! Just imagine if...

There were cookies and water. There were statements made. It was a good day for T-shirts. **E**

Have you heard the one about...

Here is part of the statement our Barbara Garcia made to the news media at the June 2nd gathering on the sidewalk in front of the Enloe Conference Center. She spoke for Enloe's service unit. You had to be there to hear it, because there was no mention of it in the media's coverage.

...I, along with 600 of my coworkers who work as secretaries, lab and pharmacy techs, and others, won the right to bargain a contract with our employer over two and a half years ago. But...We've been ignored, disciplined for defending our fellow employees, forced into silence, harassed by security guards, and now, because of the low patient census caused by the lack of anesthesiologists, are also forced to take pay cuts because of lack of work. We've been asked to make financial sacrifices for the new expansion, but it shouldn't be on our backs or the backs of our patients.

This hospital board and administration would rather see their employees quit, demoralized, and living on the edge of poverty rather than obey a federal order to just bargain with us. We heard that Dan Neumeister is in bargaining for his new contract. He won't work without a contract, yet he denies us the same right.

...The problems at our hospital stem from Dan Neumeister's management. That's why we support the call by our doctors for his removal. We need a CEO whose interest is in working WITH doctors, employees, patients and the community. Dan Neumeister has proven he's not that CEO.

It's time...

... How many more doctors have to quit...? It's time to bring our Enloe anesthesiologists back, to get to the bargaining table with us, to bargain fairly with all of their employees. It's time for Dan Neumeister's retirement. It's time to bring new leadership and direction to our hospital in order to help restore the community's confidence....

...and then there's the Enloe picnic coming up on June 16th...