

PRESS RELEASE

September 23, 2010

The Staff Nurses' Association of Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital (SNA) has filed a ten-day notice of intent to strike on Monday, October 4, 2010 at 5 am to Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at 5 am.

The Staff Nurses' Association represents approximately 650 Staff Nurses at the Hospital on Montgomery Drive, ambulatory surgery center, and urgent care centers in Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. The current contract expires September 30, 2010, and unless SNA and the Hospital reach agreement, Nurses will be voting soon after September 30th on whether to strike.

Negotiations have been underway since August 17, 2010 and there are critical issues that remain unresolved:

- Assurances that adequate numbers of trained assistive personnel will be staffed, ensuring that Nurses are able to adequately monitor their patients and respond to their needs
- Preservation of current staffing protections of the Lead (charge) Nurse free of patient assignment
- Availability of Nurses with specialized skills to assist with patient care
- Hospital proposal for losses in vacation and sick leave benefits
- Lack of adequate health benefit coverage for retired Nurses (currently \$275-325 per month until eligible for Medicare). The Hospital proposal is a total of \$11,000-21,000 lifetime benefit (dependent on age)
- Substantial decrease in pay for Nurses on-call
- Losses in eligibility for overtime pay
- Wage increase is not yet resolved, but the parties are close to agreement

Staff Nurses at Memorial are so deeply concerned and at times alarmed about their inability to consistently provide safe patient care that they have documented what they fail to accomplish in a shift. Although this data has been shared with Hospital Administration, there has been no demonstrable response.

In addition, patient safety surveys conducted in '09 and '10 have yielded concerning results.

The Hospital reports profit margins of \$9.3 million for fiscal year '09 and \$13.6 million for fiscal year '10. While we acknowledge the challenges of providing health care during these times, Nurses do not understand the Hospital's apparent choice of priorities. For Staff Nurses who are increasingly desperate to provide safe patient care, the priority is clear. If the SNA Staff Nurses do choose to strike, it will be a decision based on their concerns for patient safety and for their practice of nursing at SRMH.

For questions or more information, please contact Sue Gadbois, RN, SNA President at 575-8853.