



NEGOTIATION NEWS

Nurses put the care in healthcare

A graphic of a stethoscope with a heart shape formed by the tubing, positioned to the right of the text.

August 18, 2016

MNA NURSES VOTE TO STRIKE ALLINA HEALTH AGAIN

Nurses represented by the Minnesota Nurses Association voted overwhelmingly to call for a second Unfair Labor Practice strike on Allina Health and reject the hospital negotiators' latest offer on a new three-year contract.

On August 1, nurses attempted to meet the employer halfway by agreeing to end two of their four affordable healthcare plans and raise the deductibles and out-of-pocket costs for 4,000 nurses. Allina Health responded with a proposal that caps the company's contribution toward premiums and puts the burden of cost increases almost solely on the nurses. Allina also insisted that the two existing plans be terminated if enrollment dips below 1,000 participants. Nurses rejected this offer.

"Nurses weren't happy with this offer by any means," said Angela Becchetti, Registered Nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. "We know that forcing nurses to shoulder the costs of insurance that Allina manages means the company will put our insurance in a death spiral. The costs will get so high nurses will have to leave our plans."

Nurses who voted no also were frustrated that the Allina proposal contained no guarantees of training to deal with workplace violence and no improvements to staffing to care for patients, which the nurses' negotiating team had offered. Nurses at all five hospitals voted by overwhelming majority to reject the contract offer and authorize the elected negotiating committee to call an open-ended Unfair Labor Practice strike. Nurses at all five hospitals also voted by more than a 66 percent super majority to reject the contract and authorize the negotiating committee to call a strike. This includes 4,800 nurses at Abbott Northwestern, Mercy, Phillips Eye Institute, United, and Unity hospitals. MNA must give the employer another 10-day notice prior to engaging in a strike.

"Nurses know they might be out of a job for a while," Becchetti said. "They are prepared, and the communications that they've had with Allina since the last strike have only made the nurses more angry and more resolved to fight for a fair contract."

Nurses on the negotiating committee will begin planning for an open-ended strike. However, they anticipate that the nurses will be called back to the bargaining table one last time with Allina Health by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.