



UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL
AND TECHNICAL
EMPLOYEES

CWA Local 9119
AFL-CIO

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Understaffing and employee turnover endanger patient safety in UC health care operations

Over 4,000 unionized health care professionals at the University of California say management's practices of chronic understaffing and encouraging turnover are a threat to the safety and quality of care for patients at its 5 renowned medical centers.

"Health care professionals work every day to go above and beyond for their patients," said Lilia Castillo, a clinical social worker at UCLA and a member of University Professional and Technical Employees-CWA, which represents the employees. "But you can't build quality patient care on a foundation of bad labor practices." Castillo said UC management's failure to fully staff hospitals can lead to increased length of stay and poorer outcomes for patients, and it wastes money too.

Instead of hiring enough professionals at prevailing wages, health care workers say UC's push to pay less means fewer people apply for jobs, and those that are hired don't stay as long because they leave for better wages and conditions at other institutions. UC's understaffing ends up forcing existing employees to work beyond their breaking points, skipping lunch and staying late.

Union-represented health care workers want solution

"We are passionate about our work, but passion can't always overcome lack of staffing and resources," said Greg Wine, a member of the union's health care bargaining team and a senior dietitian at the UC Davis Medical Center. He said his fellow union members want solutions: "they've been understaffed and underpaid for years now," he said, "while UC's medical center profits have continued to rise."

The union's team will be negotiating with UC management on **April 9-10** at the **University of California Office of the President in Oakland**, and again on **April 23-24** in **Los Angeles**. (Contact Greg Wine below for locations).

Management's last offer includes a "cost of living" increase that doesn't even keep pace with inflation, insufficient market wage adjustments, and a risky pension opt out that undermines UC's existing pension plan. Wine called that offer "insulting" to health care professionals, who work in a variety of job titles, including Pharmacists, Nuclear Medicine Technicians, Social Workers and Physical Therapists.

[UPTE-CWA](http://www.upte-cwa.org) is one of the largest at the University of California, representing 15,000 workers across the 10-campus, 5-medical center system, including health care professionals, researchers, and technical workers.

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