



## NEWS RELEASE

County Administrative Office

**CONTACT:**

David Wert

Public Information Officer

(909) 387-4717

[dwert@sbcounty.gov](mailto:dwert@sbcounty.gov)

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### Union sinks to deceit in ploy for more taxpayer money

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The California Nurses Association, the union that represents County nurses, is attempting to deceive the public in its effort to justify a planned two-day abandonment of patients and its demands for tens of millions of additional taxpayer dollars.

Negotiations between taxpayer representatives and the union have dragged on for more than a year because of the union's insistence on receiving millions more in salaries and benefits than any of their peers and the union's refusal to agree to the same reasonable terms already accepted by thousands of other County employees.

Publicly, the union claims its concerns center on patient care and working conditions for its members. However, at the bargaining table, the only thing the union talks about and really wants is more of the public's tax dollars.

Despite the union's claim that its primary mission is patient safety, the California Nurses Association is urging its members to walk off the job and leave patients in the lurch for two days on December 9 and 10 as a way to pressure taxpayers into giving the union millions in additional public dollars.

The walkout could cost taxpayers millions of dollars if the County is forced to hire temporary nurses to ensure patients receive the care they need. That's why the County will seek injunctive relief to protect County patients and taxpayers from the union's planned job action.

In making its case for relief, the County stated that trauma center nurses are necessary and should be exempted from the planned walkout. The County's Arrowhead Regional Medical Center operates the state's second-busiest trauma center and is the hospital of last resort for thousands of needy families. The California Nurses Association stated specifically that trauma center nurses are unnecessary.

Regardless of the outcome, the County is committed to ensuring that patient care would not be affected by a union walkout. The County has multiple strategies to ensure its healthcare mission would not be affected.

In its attempt to justify its unreasonable demands and its walkout plans, the California Nurses Association is making outrageous and false claims:

- County nurses are inexperienced – False. The average RN II at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center has more than 9 years of service. Corrections and Public Health nurses



have even more experience, an average of about 12 years of service.

- County nurses are underpaid – False. Based on data provided by the Hospital Association of Southern California, RN's at ARMC are slightly above the median salary of 21 Inland Empire hospitals surveyed, but the County provides far greater benefits than most of these other hospitals.

In fact, the County's pension contribution for each nurse is approximately \$12 per hour for a benefit that most other area hospitals do not even provide. The County's proposal would result in the salaries of the average nurses at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Department of Public Health, and in corrections being even higher than their peers in other Southern California counties.

A nurse who works 30 years with the County, retires at age 55, and lives to age 80 can expect to receive **\$1.86 million** in retirement income from the County.

- The County is having trouble recruiting nurses – False. Since July 1, the County has received 983 applications for nursing positions at ARMC.
- There is a high turnover rate among County nurses – False. According to the Hospital Association of Southern California, for 2013, the average turnover rate for nurses statewide has been 8.9 percent. The Southern California rate has been 9.5 percent. The turnover rate at ARMC has been only approximately 5.75 percent.

Ask the California Nurses Association for the data to back up its claims and to cite its sources.