

## UFCW Local 555 returns to original Kaiser union coalition

By Don McIntosh

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 is leaving the recently-formed Alliance of Health Care Unions (ACHU) as of Jan. 1 and rejoining the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions (CKPU).

ACHU is a coalition of 22 local unions representing about 47,000 workers in eight states at Kaiser Permanente; it broke away last year from the existing CKPU. About 11 local unions and 80,000 workers remained in CKPU, which has been in existence since 1996. The two union coalitions negotiated and ratified separate national collective bargaining agreements with Kaiser earlier this year.

Local 555 has been one of 12 UFCW locals in the ACHU. It represents about 1,000 pharmacy technicians and imaging technology workers at Kaiser locations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Local 555 healthcare division coordinator Esai Alday said the local decided to leave because ACHU made a change to its gov-

erning structure that left Local 555 with no representation on the coalition's governing body.

"For us, it's really a matter of about making sure that we have a voice in decisions that directly affect our membership."

Local 555 members at Kaiser, both coalitions, and Kaiser itself were notified of the decision to leave ACHU on Dec. 11.

Alday said the shift will have no effect on members from a contractual standpoint. Their wages, benefits and workplace rights will remain the same under the local collective bargaining agreement that runs through October 2021. ACHU's national agreement is an addendum to that agreement. The decision means that Local 555 will bargain with CKPU unions when the contract comes up for renewal.

"We see a positive impact on members in the bigger picture—of having a voice at the table," Alday said, "so that their representatives have a say in all decisions that are made through the coalition that could affect them."



More than 300 Oregon Nurses Association members and supporters held an informational picket near Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center Sept. 13 to protest staffing and safety problems at the hospital.

Photo courtesy of Oregon Nurses Association

## Corvallis nurses reject contract offer

By a 4-to-1 margin, nurses at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis voted down a contract offer Dec. 4 that they say fails to ensure safe staffing levels.

Represented by the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA), the unit of over 500 nurses has been working without a contract since June 30. Nurses say the 188-bed facility—Corval-

lis' only hospital—has chronic staffing and safety problems, and they want an end to excessive forced overtime. Operating room nurses are being assigned 12 or more hours a week of mandatory overtime beyond their full-time schedules. ONA says Samaritan Health Services has also cancelled negotiation meetings with little notice, and has

failed to respond to information requests or to proposals to improve staffing. Hospital managers turned down four proposed mediation dates in December. Nurses, frustrated, plan more public events. They'll gather at city hall 5 p.m. Dec. 20 for a public caroling event with altered holiday favorites.

Our entire organization joins in wishing you a Happy Holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

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