



# NORTH MEMORIAL

# United

A Newsletter for SEIU Local 113 Members @ North Memorial

April 2007

## The Changing Face of Health Care:

### *How Profits are Driving Health Care Consolidation and Construction*

#### *Construction Focused on Profits*

Concern has been raised in several legislative hearings this session in St. Paul that the current reimbursement encourages growth in some areas of health care to the detriment of putting resources into other equally as important but not as profitable services. The table below provides a partial listing of services and their relative profitability.

<b>Relatively Profitable</b>	<b>Relatively Unprofitable</b>
Angioplasty	AIDS services
Birthing Rooms	Burn treatment
Cardiac Cath lab	Psychiatric Services (child and adult)
CT scanner	Emergency Room
MRI	Obstetrics
Open heart surgery	Trauma Center
Orthopedic surgery	
PET scans	
Sports Medicine	
Women's Centers	

*Source: Horwitz (2005) "Making Profits and Providing care: Comparing Nonprofit, For-Profit and Government Hospitals" Health Affairs 24(3):790*

Now think about what services your hospital has been investing in these past years, and you'll see a pattern. Investments move towards those services that get paid more, but not necessarily the services that a community really needs.

#### *Consolidation Focused on Profits*

The managed care environment has created pressures that have caused Twin Cities hospitals to consolidate into corporate care systems to achieve efficiencies—resulting in the formation of several large health care systems and ending the era of community hospitals. In 1976, there were 35 independent hospitals with about 10,000 acute care beds in the metropolitan area. In the 1980s, the metropolitan hospitals underwent a series of mergers forming the predecessors of the major multi-hospital systems that dominate the market today—Allina Hospitals and Clinic, Fairview System, HealthEast, Inc., Children's Health Care, North Memorial and Park Nicollet Health Service.

Our current health care system has created a vicious cycle that has forced our employers to look for any way to cut costs, regardless of its impact on patients or workers. It's time to start building a health care system that works for all.



SEIU Local 113 President  
Julie Schnell

## Maple Grove Update

Our bill to hold North Memorial to their word moves forward at the capitol. The Hospital Accountability Act will be heard by the full House and Senate soon North Memorial asked for our support for the Maple Grove Hospital and said we could transfer there when it opened. Now, we expect North Memorial to keep that commitment to us.

Instead, North Memorial has said that the Maple Grove hospital will be a separate employer. We will have to quit our jobs and re-apply in Maple Grove. That means we'll lose our seniority, lose our benefit credit, and lose our pension.

Hundreds have signed the petition supporting the Hospital Accountability Act. Call Jigme @ 612-331-4690 if you haven't had a chance yet.

## Pension Benefits Increasing

The Future Service Benefit Credit has been increased from \$26.00 per year to \$27.00, effective January 1, 2007. This means that when we retire, our benefit checks will increase by \$1 for every full year of service. "This increase takes us closer to our goal to make sure everybody who works hard can retire with dignity," said Julie Schnell, President of SEIU Local 113.

## Collective Action Works!

Recently, we have taken three united actions and have placed the ball firmly in management's court. Hundreds have signed the petitions and taken part in marches to obtain access to the Wellness Center, to win respect in the Housekeeping department, and to turn back North's breach of our contract by imposing dental premiums.

## **Lori Theim-Busch:** **Adventures as an Active Union Steward**

My name is Lori Theim-Busch and I have worked at North Memorial for over 20 years as a Phlebotomy/Ekg tech.

For me, being a steward has meant many things. Mostly, it has been an adventure. I have learned about our contract and labor law. My eyes have been opened to problems that are affecting other areas of the hospital and problems that are happening in other hospitals. I have learned about the tremendous value of having a unified workforce and the unbelievable strength that can occur when a group of people can combine their efforts toward a single goal.



Being a steward has also led me to an awareness of how politics can work for, or against you. I remember going to Lobby Day at the Capitol and hearing Paul Wellstone speak and then later meeting him. It felt like the sun came out to learn more about him and what he stood for. I participated in door knocks, for him and other candidates. Then, it seemed, the sun went down when we learned his plane crashed.

*“My wish is for everyone to spend more time in the driver’s seat of their life and less time as the passenger.”*

*--Lori Theim-Busch*

I also learned that even though one can build political allies by working together to help each other achieve goals, it is not enough to simply assume the politician you have supported and helped get elected really understands your needs. This was made abundantly clear when, during our last contract negotiations, we were at the capital and I heard the senator that I had campaigned and door knocked for lambaste the union. This taught me that I must also get to know

my elected officials and be visible so they can get to know me and my issues.

My wish is for everyone to spend more time in the driver’s seat of their life and less time as the passenger. I hope everyone can get involved to the best of their ability with the decisions that are being made in their work place, schools, neighborhoods and government. I now understand why Committee On Political Education (COPE) donations are important. The value of the things I have learned from becoming a union steward is immeasurable.



### **President Julie Schnell Stands With North Memorial Stewards to Continue Fight for Affordable Health Care**

In March, SEIU Local 113 President Julie Schnell met with our Stewards to plan our next steps in the fight for a health care system that works for everyone. Together with the Stewards, President Schnell committed to taking the fight to any arena that we need to from politics to the community to the bargaining table to make sure that everyone in our communities have affordable access to the quality care we provide every day.

## **LPNs, HHAs, and Pharmacists Ratify New Contracts**

Congratulations to every member who worked hard to negotiate strong contracts in these three groups. Now, we all move on to the important step of contract enforcement.

## **Working Together With Community Partners**

Members of SEIU Local 113 are beginning to work together with ISIAAH to help us all achieve a health care system that works for all.

Why?

ISIAAH is an interfaith coalition of 80 member congregations that work together to deal with community issues that SEIU members are uniting around every day. ISIAAH’s leaders have been working in our community for over a decade, focusing on the shared values of:

-a hopeful attitude toward our common future

-Understanding that we live in community, systemic injustice that affects one, affects us all

-Sharing our abundance of resources and natural talents/gifts for the benefit of the common good

Together, we will work together intentionally to build on these common values and to combine our strengths for a better community, and specifically, a better health care system. If you would like more information on the collaboration with ISIAAH, contact Ryan Nagle @ 612-331-4690.