

SEIU-UHW EXECUTIVE BOARD MARCH 28-30, 2019 MINUTES (LA) – ADOPTED 6/28/19

MARCH 28, 2019

Plenary: Leading by Example and Creating Crisis

President Dave Regan opened the meeting discussing the day's action at Cedars Sinai and the importance of digital organizing in the modern era. Participants of the action used the #CedarsGratitude hashtag to fill the Cedars website with SEIU purple. He then swore in newly elected Executive Board members. Following this, minutes from the last Executive Board meeting were approved by the membership body. It was also noted that Andrea and Ken, Deputy Trustees for Healthcare Michigan (an SEIU Local) were in attendance.

During the last Executive Board meeting, the news of the NLRB complaint against Kaiser had come out, and the complaint was going to trial. Now Kaiser has agreed to resume bargaining with no preconditions, and no requirement that members agree to a new partnership agreement, as well as no limitation of political activity or speech about Kaiser. The first bargaining meetings will take place April 17-19, but because UHW has not dropped charges the trial will still occur and will begin April 22nd. On the other hand, the Cedars bargaining team was told that if they went to the day's rally that they would put their jobs in jeopardy (which is illegal), but they still showed up. UHW is prepared to let contracts with Cedars expire so workers can act outside of the contract limitations.

In closing, Dave Regan expressed hope for Gavin Newsom's term as governor and his willingness to take on a pro-worker agenda.

Hospital Division Director Chokri Bensaid played a clip from the movie Selma of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights movement leaders strategizing around the idea of "creating a crisis to resolve a crisis." This idea applies to UHW campaigns as well – Prop 8 created a crisis to shine a light on the dialysis industry and move closer to resolving the crisis. The Kaiser NLRB complaint is another example.

Evelia Rodriguez (Kaiser South Bay) discussed the need for strike preparation – Kaiser division will need support from the hospital division and community division. Going off the Selma clip, she reiterated that Prop 8 and the Kaiser NLRB complaint are both examples of creating crises to resolve crises.

Savonnda Blaylock (Kaiser Modesto) talked about "flight teams" challenging Kaiser in public. In October 2018, flight teams followed Kaiser to New Orleans, got in contact with local unions, and held actions every day Kaiser was there. In February, a flight team went to the Lake Nona Institute Impact Forum in Florida to speak about Kaiser, and in March another team confronted Kaiser at South by Southwest. Savonnda pointed out the importance of digital activism in fighting Kaiser's narrative building.

Heather Wright (Kaiser Santa Clara Clinics) spoke about gardeners affected by Kaiser's outsourcing decision. Last year "gardener delegations" and allies (totaling 1,100+) held actions in cities across the state. Heather shared photos and testimonials of gardeners scared to lose their jobs and financial security. On Tuesday March 26th Kaiser gardeners received their 60-day notices.

Education Organizer Terrie Ridgeway-Olmos described the Coding Opportunity project being piloted with Western Governors University (WGU). California is anticipated to have a shortage of 450,000 healthcare workers within the next ten years; the Coding Opportunity program pilot is intended to

address that shortage through competency-based medical coding education that would serve as a conduit to union healthcare jobs. (Future programs would provide education outside of coding.)

Political Department Director Suzanne Jimenez went over UHW’s legislative priorities. She discussed the 2018 election cycle, pointing out that now-Governor Gavin Newsom was elected on promises to improve our healthcare system – California residents want lower costs and expanded access. Current California healthcare justice work is being pursued by a coalition of healthcare advocates, immigrant rights organizations, and others, with a focus on holding corporations accountable, expanding subsidies for middle-class families, and providing access to Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status.

Two bills are currently top priority: AB 290 (introduced by Assemblymember Jim Wood) and SB 343 (co-introduced by State Senator Richard Pan). AB 290 was introduced last year as SB 1156 but was vetoed by then-Governor Jerry Brown. The bill is intended to curb kidney dialysis company profits by preventing dialysis clinics from charging private insurers more than Medicare’s reimbursement rate. As of the Executive Board convening, the bill was passed by the Assembly Health Committee by 11-2. SB 343 is intended to remove Kaiser’s special treatment from the state by removing legal exemptions that allow Kaiser (and some other health systems) to keep certain information private – including insurance costs and hospital financial information.

Theresa Troth (Kaiser Vallejo Call Center) followed with updates from the Adopt-a-Legislator program. They have been discussing the situation with Kaiser and are trying to have more assembly members and senators put pressure on them.

Marta Munoz (Community Division) then went over the recent March 20th lobby visit for SB 29, which allow eligible Californians to receive Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status. She talked about her cousin, who was sent home from the hospital and denied a life-saving surgery because he didn’t have health insurance, only to die in the emergency room the next day.

MARCH 29, 2019

Morning Plenary: Our 2019 Priorities

President Dave Regan delivered the morning’s opening plenary by going over five major strategic initiatives for 2019.

These initiatives are 1. bargaining with Kaiser, 2. continued work on dialysis, 3. expanding efforts in Arizona, 4. launching the Western Governors University (WGU) campaign, and 5. reimagining the community division.

Kaiser thinks workers make too much (are “over market”) and has tried to use a segment of workers who settled for low pay increases and other concessions to set the standards for everyone else. UHW wants to set precedent for the future – “once they learn they can take stuff from you when it is not justified, they will keep taking.”

Dialysis continues to be a political game; a dialysis bill is advancing in California’s legislature and similar bills have been filed in Oregon and Illinois. Dialysis companies spent a lot of money to defeat Prop 8.

Our work in **Arizona** comes from understanding that economic improvements there are good for workers in California. We are preparing a ballot initiative for 2020 that would give all non-physician and non-management hospital workers a 5% annual raise, would protect pre-existing conditions, and would strengthen hospital infection control. Because Arizona is a right-to-work state we are trying to build power through community members and voters.

The campaign with **WGU** focuses on the future of the healthcare workforce. California will have a major shortage of healthcare workers in the near future and these are jobs that can provide upward mobility. UHW is trying to build a pipeline of workers who go through medical training programs and graduate with union jobs. We are looking at a co-op model in which the union partners with employers and offers a lower markup than other programs.

Lastly, the **Community Division** is changing its approach to outreach in line with UHW's vision of expanding our base of support beyond hospital workers. This is still in the works, but one of the guiding ideas is that we are looking to create membership at a larger scale through nontraditional means.

He concluded by highlighting the gains through previous initiatives in Arizona and through the Fairness Project. He emphasized that we should embrace conflict, and that conflict is necessary to create change. Other messages: resources and scale matter, and it's important to speak to common good.

Afternoon Plenary: Leading by Example and Delivering the Common Good

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla commenced the afternoon plenary with a discussion of his efforts to increase voter registration and participation in California and elsewhere. His work in California has included implementing same-day voter registration (2017), online voter pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds (2017), and automatic voter registration with completed driver's license or state ID applications and renewals (2018). He has been working with the Democratic Association of Secretaries of State to help implement these voting reforms in other states.

Five counties in California have piloted Voter Choice Act (VCA) programs, in accordance with the law of the same name that was passed by the state legislature in 2016. These programs include the following changes: voters in these counties can go to the polling station most convenient to them (rather than an assigned station), full ballots (rather than just samples) are mailed a month ahead of voting day, and voting centers are open for 11 days prior to elections. The counties that implemented VCA pilots saw higher voter turnout than previous years.

Organizing Division Director Cass Gualvez gave a presentation for Women's History Month, detailing the history of women's strikes and their role in the labor movement. Historic examples included the inception of the ILGWU following the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, UAW, United Farm Workers, and Medical College Hospital. More recent examples included Justice for Janitors, children protesting policies addressing climate change and teacher's strikes from 2018 and 2019.

Fay Eastman (Kaiser Oakland) moderated a panel of teachers who were involved in the Los Angeles and Oakland teacher strikes this year. **Catherine Gibson** is a member of the **Oakland Education Association (OEA)**, and **Nicolle Fefferman** is a member of **United Teachers Los Angeles**.

Catherine said that Oakland teachers were able to have all of their demands met after a seven-day strike. The strike came after 18 months of bargaining and was overwhelmingly favored when the vote took place. They received both material and emotional support from the community, including contributions to a strike fund that paid 1800 teachers roughly \$500 each. Prior to and during the strike they used social media to update everyone on the timeline and other details. Her advice to future/potential strikers was to have savings set aside in case of a strike, and to show up for others (teachers showed up for one another). Following the resolution of a strike, she said that it was important to maintain momentum – in OEA’s case, their contract is expiring in June and they need to be ready for that.

Nicolle spoke on the effects of underfunding in LAUSD: 40 student classrooms are common, nurses are spread thin, and many bathrooms are not properly stocked or maintained – despite \$2 billion in reserves. The strike had been part of their negotiation conversation for a year, and in the lead-up to the strike being called they engaged in outreach both in person with the PTA and over social media to “kill the misinformation and fear” and keep people updated about what was going on with the school board. She and her husband are former organizers, so they knew how to effectively maintain a campaign. Her advice for potential/future strikers was that they should take it slow and that you need the right people to be the ones having tough conversations with others. Like Catherine, she pointed out the need for continued work after the resolution of a strike – contracts need to be enforced in workers’ daily lives.

Community Division Director Hortencia Armendariz discussed Kaiser’s Thrive campaign and other advertising. This was followed by an activity in which tables of Executive Board members designed picket signs with slogans intended to challenge Kaiser. She then led a remembrance of Mario Gonzalez, a community leader and dialysis patient who passed away in February 2019.

Savonnda Blaylock (Kaiser Modesto) and Wynona Spears (Kaiser Downey-Clinic) spoke about their experiences going to Tijuana to provide healthcare to migrants at the border. Savonnda participated in both trips and spoke of her strong sense of connection with individuals she met there, despite the language barrier. She and Wynona both talked about their sense of compassion and desire for healthcare justice transcending national borders. They concluded by showing a video UHW made of the trip, including interviews with members whose parents were immigrants. After the video members who participated in the trips were asked to stand for recognition.

Vice President Stan Lyles reviewed SEIU-UHW’s wildfire relief efforts. Thus far 63 members have applied for support through the Disaster Relief Fund and 52 members have received checks. Stan played a slideshow of the wildlife relief team and a video from a member who received assistance after losing his house.

To conclude, **Stan Lyles** led a recognition of **Toni Burns (Dignity Health Medical Foundation)**, whom he met during bargaining for Dignity (CHW at the time) and who will be retiring.