

**Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA)**

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## **In Landslide Vote, Thousands of Stanford and Packard Nurses Vote to Authorize Strike**

***Nurses' Readiness to Strike Calls Attention to Urgent Need for Solutions on Staffing, Mental Health and Wellness Support, Competitive Wages and Benefits***

**STANFORD, CA** — The Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA) announced that **93% of all Nurses eligible to vote authorized the independent union to call a strike**. That means that **more than 4,500 Nurses at Stanford and Packard voted in favor of strike authorization**. After bargaining for the last 13 weeks, joining more than 30 bargaining sessions, and marking one week of working without contracts, Nurses' readiness to strike demonstrates the urgency of the great professional and personal crisis they are facing and the solutions they are demanding from hospital executives.

CRONA's core demands focus on recruitment and retention of Nursing talent, amid an industry-wide shortage and Nurses being exhausted after working through the pandemic, many in short-staffed units. As many as 45% of Nurses surveyed by CRONA in November 2021 said they were considering leaving.

"What message does it send when Stanford and Packard hospitals have hundreds of millions on hand from federal pandemic relief, and Nurses are consistently taking on overtime and denying ourselves rest and recovery because the hospitals are not staffed adequately. We have been working extra shifts and powering through exhausting conditions because our patients and our colleagues need us. We need the hospitals' executives to show up for us," **said Colleen Borges**, President of CRONA and a Nurse in the pediatric oncology department.

Stanford and Packard hospitals' claims during negotiations about being richly staffed are belied by the significant rise in Assignment Despite Objections (ADOs) filed by Nurses — documentation notifying hospital supervisors of assignments for which Nurses do not have adequate resources, training or staff. At both hospitals, the number of ADOs rose significantly from 2020 to 2021.

"The decision by members to overwhelmingly authorize a strike shows that we are fed up with the status quo of working conditions at the hospitals. We need contracts that allow us to care for ourselves and our families so we can continue providing world-class care," **Borges** continued.

Although Nurses on the Negotiating Team have continued taking care of patients while attending weekly bargaining sessions, Stanford and Packard Chief nursing administrators Dale Beatty and Jesus Cepero have not once come to the table to meet with them. For many Nurses, this has been a clear sign of how out of touch hospital executives are with the persistent challenges facing bedside providers.

"It's unconscionable that the hospitals tell overworked and exhausted Nurses that we need to be more available for work after two years of grueling conditions. This is a confounding and illogical solution to our burnout, and it's no wonder so many of us are rethinking whether we have a

future at Stanford and even the Nursing profession,” said **Mark O’Neill**, who has been working regular shifts in J5, a post-cardiothoracic surgical unit, while also attending twice weekly bargaining sessions with hospital executives.

The recent death by suicide of a travel nurse at Stanford, Michael Odell, has underscored CRONA’s concern with ensuring Nursing sustainability, including improved access to time off and mental health support. In an interview with [NPR](#), CRONA Vice President and Nurse at Stanford’s radiology department **Kathy Stormberg** shared that Stanford and Packard hospital executives were not focused enough on how to ease the burden on Nurses’ mental and physical health, *“Hospitals have not wanted to acknowledge how short-staffed we are. They don’t want to acknowledge that relying on travel nurses and staff nurses working overtime shifts isn’t sustainable. People are worn out.”*

If CRONA calls a strike it would be the third time in CRONA’s history and the first after two decades. CRONA would first provide a 10-day notice, as required by law. The strike authorization vote began on Thursday morning and was conducted throughout the day at a nearby hotel. CRONA’s practice is to report vote results based on all eligible voters, which means that high turnout is key. The record number of Nurses who voted shows that CRONA Nurses are united in authorizing a strike.

The hospitals and CRONA met with a federal mediator on Monday, April 4, and are meeting again today.

## **ABOUT CRONA PROPOSALS**

The Union has put forth a comprehensive package of proposals based on Nurses’ top priorities and designed to recruit and retain talent, as well as make nursing a sustainable career. These include:

- **Competitive wages and benefits:** Across-the-board increases to base hourly wages to encourage Nurses to sign-on and stay, and provide incentives for experienced Nurses to stay.
- **Critical care differential:** Provide a differential for critical care Nurses in high acuity areas that have not been able to recruit and retain Nurses.
- **No-cost medical plan:** Protecting Nurse wellness by rejecting the hospitals’ proposal to eliminate the guarantee of a no-cost PPO plan coverage for employee+spouse and employee+family.
- **Mental health and wellness support:** Improved access to mental health counseling.
- **Student loan reimbursements:** A new student loan reimbursement program to allow Nurses and the hospitals to take advantage of current law providing favorable tax treatment for some student loan payments.
- **Safe staffing:** Calling on hospitals to staff to acuity and provide guidance for when units should staff up to address patient needs.
- **Weekends and Vacation:** Ensuring Nurses are able to take time off for self care and scheduled vacation time. Nurses should have a say in how weekends are scheduled in their units.
- **Anti-bias training:** Calling for live training for managers and Nurses on implicit bias and how to be an ally.

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**About CRONA**

*The Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA) is an independent union at Stanford Health Care and Stanford Children's Health that represents approximately 5,000 Registered Nurses.*