

Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA)

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'Instead of Acknowledging Our Sacrifices, Hospitals Would Rather Push Nurses To Strike' – 5000 Stanford and Packard Nurses to Begin Strike on April 25

Nurses at Leading Healthcare System Call Strike After Hospital Management Fails to Agree to Contracts That Would Ensure Sustainable Profession and World-Class Patient Care

CRONA Provides 10-Day Strike Notice to Hospitals, Authorized Through A Landslide Vote By Nurses After Contracts Expired March 31

STANFORD, CA — The Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA) announced to Stanford Health Care and Packard Children's hospital administrators that approximately 5000 Nurses will go on strike beginning April 25, after management failed to agree to contract terms that address the personal and professional crises Nurses face. Nurses, who are now in the second week of working with expired contracts, have brought forward proposals — in over 30 sessions over 13 weeks of bargaining — that are needed to continue providing world-class care at Stanford and Packard hospitals.

“Striking is a last resort, but the hospitals are refusing to take our well-being seriously. The hospitals must provide Nurses the same level of care, respect, and support that we provide each day for our patients,” said **Charon Brown**, a Nurse in the cardiovascular ICU at Stanford Health Care. **“Nurses are exhausted and we're burning out. We need contracts that give us time for rest and recovery, mental health support, and wages and benefits that take care of us and our families.”**

On April 8, 93% of all Nurses eligible to vote — or more than 4,500 Nurses at Stanford and Packard — voted in favor of authorizing a strike. The strike notice comes after three sessions with a federal mediator, which did not result in an agreement that reflects the solutions Nurses have identified as key to addressing chronic staffing problems, supporting mental health and wellness, and ensuring competitive wages and benefits. The Nurses' contracts expired on March 31.

“Our working conditions are our patients' care conditions,” emphasized **Eileen Pachkofsky**, a pediatric oncology Nurse at Packard Children's Hospital. **“The last two years have taken a real toll on all of us, and the hospitals aren't giving us what we need to support ourselves or our patients. Without solutions that allow Nurses to rest, recover, and have sustainable careers, the hospitals risk losing professional, dedicated caregivers like me.”**

The pandemic has exacerbated long-standing issues in healthcare, with burnout especially pronounced as Nurses face increased patient acuity and persistent short-staffing. In a member-wide survey by the independent union, as many as 45% of CRONA Nurses surveyed said they are considering leaving the hospitals. Across the country, Nurses are [leaving positions and the profession altogether](#). In California, there are approximately 40,000 vacant nursing positions, or a 14% gap, according to [UCSF Health Workforce Research Center on Long-Term Care](#).

CRONA points to the hospitals' strong financial standing as an opportunity and reason to invest in their Nurses with resources that will enable sustainable careers. In a recent financial [disclosure](#), Stanford and Packard hospitals reported that their joint operating surplus increased by \$676 million in 2021, and

reported a combined revenue of approximately \$8.3 billion. SHC's CEO David Entwistle received more than \$3 million in compensation in tax year 2019, according to the hospital's Form 990.

"I am frustrated that Stanford and Packard hospitals would rather cut corners than invest in their bedside Nurses, especially after receiving hundreds of millions in federal aid dollars. Providing care at such wealthy hospitals should not cost Nurses our health, our sanity, or our time with our loved ones," said **Colleen Borges**, President of CRONA and a pediatric oncology Nurse at Packard Children's Hospital. **"Instead of acknowledging our sacrifices and rewarding us with the support we need, the hospitals would rather push overworked and exhausted Nurses toward a strike."**



CRONA is seeking contract terms that would vastly improve the retiree medical benefits, which currently cover only a few years of premium expenses if a Nurse retires before age 65, even if the Nurse has worked for the hospital for 30 years. CRONA is also seeking a commitment that the hospitals will provide the necessary tools to staff to acuity — a change that is needed given that the complexity of many cases at the hospitals far exceeds that of most other hospitals in the country.

Stanford and Packard were also some of the biggest recipients nationally of federal aid, with Stanford Health Care receiving [\\$410 million](#) for the Fiscal Year ending in August 2021, in addition to \$135 million for the Fiscal Year ending in August 2020, for a total of \$545 million. Lucile Packard Children's Hospital received [\\$6.7 million](#) in FY 2021 and \$79.0 million in FY 2020 from CARES Act provider relief funding, totaling nearly \$86 million.

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 meaningful 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."**

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.

Borges continued, “**There is a profound staffing crisis happening across the nursing profession. Either we make transformative changes, or Nurses will be pushed to their breaking point – leading Nurses to feel like they have no other choice but to step away from patient care. There is an opportunity right now for one of the country’s top healthcare systems to demonstrate leadership and to work with us to identify solutions to the Nurse shortage and ongoing burnout crisis. Hospital administrators are refusing to step up and be leaders, but CRONA Nurses know what we need to deliver world-class patient care. We are united for change and will stand strong together.**”

ABOUT CRONA PROPOSALS

The independent union has put forth a comprehensive package of proposals based on Nurses’ top priorities, which are designed to recruit and retain talent and 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.
- **Strong retiree medical benefits:** Ensure Nurses who dedicate years to the hospitals providing care for others are able to afford health care in retirement.
- **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:** Adequate staffing is critical to safe patient care and to retaining Nurses. The hospitals need to provide tools to ensure that staffing is based on acuity and that 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.