

After 3 years, Petoskey nurses still on strike

Lansing State Journal (Michigan)

October 13, 2005 Thursday

Copyright 2005 Lansing State Journal All Rights Reserved

Section: MAIN; Pg. 1A

Length: 366 words

Byline: Wieland Barbara

Body

Petoskey: Nurses were replaced by temporary employees

By Barbara Wieland

Lansing State Journal

Nurses at Ingham Regional Medical Center and hospital managers share a wish that the nurses' strike will end soon.

But that hasn't always happened in Michigan.

A strike of registered nurses in Petoskey is nearing its three-year anniversary with no resolution in sight.

The nurses, members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 406, walked off the job on Nov. 14, 2002.

They were seeking their first contract with Northern Michigan Hospital.

They still are.

"The hospital had no interest in negotiating," said Tom Anderson, a member of the union's bargaining committee.

Northern Michigan didn't return calls seeking comment.

But The Associated Press said in a 2003 story that a three-member panel appointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm criticized the hospital for what it said was a refusal to negotiate and for hiring high-priced temporary nurses.

The hospital has said the Teamsters called the strike while it was still negotiating and said the National Labor Relations Board investigated the union's unfair labor practices complaint and found Northern Michigan had negotiated in good faith.

Anderson has taken a nursing job in Mount Pleasant, but he remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached with the hospital.

That might not happen.

Hospital management "essentially broke the nurses' union up there," said Theresa Premo-Peaphon, an organizer for the Michigan Nurses Association. "They've replaced many of them with traveling nurses."

After 3 years, Petoskey nurses still on strike

Premo-Peaphon said that nurses' strikes can be costly for hospitals because they often pay a premium to get temporary nurses.

The toll can be high on the community, too, as contentious strikes can stir up disagreements.

Patient care also can suffer during a strike, she said.

Anderson counsels unions and hospitals to do everything possible to avoid a strike, even though he believes it was the right move for nurses in Petoskey. "This is a risky game," he said. "Everybody loses to some extent."

Contact Barbara Wieland at 267-1348 or bwieland@lsj.com.

"This is a risky game. Everybody loses to some extent."

Tom Anderson

Petoskey union's bargaining committee member

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: NURSES & NURSING (95%); LABOR UNIONS (90%); MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS (90%); STRIKES (90%); TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT (90%); COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (89%); LABOR DISPUTES & NEGOTIATIONS (89%); AGREEMENTS (78%); LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW (78%); LABOR RELATIONS (78%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (76%); LABOR DEPARTMENTS (73%); INVESTIGATIONS (71%); ANNIVERSARIES (57%); Medical Care; Medical Facility; Hospital; Employment; Labor Union; Strike; Medical Care; Nurse; Business; Contract (%)

Company: ASSOCIATED PRESS (56%); Northern Michigan Hospital

Organization: INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS (57%); NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (55%); NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (55%)

Industry: SIC7383 NEWS SYNDICATES (56%); NURSES & NURSING (95%); HOSPITALS (94%); HEALTH CARE (90%)

Person: JENNIFER GRANHOLM (59%)

Geographic: MICHIGAN, USA (99%); MIDWEST USA (79%); Petoskey; Michigan; Midwest

Load-Date: October 14, 2005