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Health Care

CNA Members Ratify Two Agreements With Pay Raises, Safety Protections for RNs

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Members of the California Nurses Association ratified new, three-year collective bargaining agreements for 850 registered nurses at Sutter Roseville Medical Center and 250 at Auburn Faith Medical Center that include pay increases of at least 17 percent over term and improved patient handling standards to protect nurses from back injuries, CNA announced April 15.

The contracts with Sutter Health also hold health care and pension benefits at current levels, CNA said in a news release.

CNA members overwhelmingly ratified the agreements, with 96 percent of nurses voting in favor April 13, and 100 percent of Auburn Faith nurses voting in favor April 14. The new contracts took effect upon ratification and expire June 30, 2014, to coincide with the expiration of most other CNA contracts with Sutter facilities, CNA spokeswoman Liz Jacobs told BNA April 18.

The nurses had been working under the terms of contracts that expired June 9, 2010, for the Roseville hospital and March 31, 2011, for Auburn Faith. Negotiations on the Roseville contract began April 15, 2010. Both tentative agreements were reached March 30.

RNs to Receive Immediate Raises

Registered nurses at Sutter Roseville will receive an immediate 5 percent raise, and Auburn Faith RNs will receive an immediate 3 percent raise under the pacts. All nurses will receive an additional 14 percent in raises over the term of the contracts, CNA and Sutter said. Also, a new 11th step for nurses with 15 or more years of experience has been added to the existing 10-step wage scale. RNs with at least 20 years of tenure also will be eligible for additional raises of 2 percent or 3 percent.

The contracts also prohibit Sutter from cancelling registered nurses from their shifts when patient acuity requires staffing beyond the minimum nurse-to-patient staffing ratios mandated by state law. In addition, the Roseville contract includes a new patient lifting and handling policy that allows nurses to use their professional clinical judgment, and provides access to lift devices and training to safely move patients, CNA said.

Technology Will Not Displace Nurses

The contract also contains language that the introduction of new technology at the hospitals should be used to enhance nursing skills and professional judgment, but not to displace nurses, according to CNA and Sutter. CNA said the language is standard in many of its contracts.

Overall, CNA said the improvements in patient care measures and nurse compensation will improve safety and strengthen recruitment and retention of registered nurses at the hospitals.

Sutter officials also welcomed the new contracts.

“This agreement reflects Sutter Roseville's commitment to providing competitive wages and benefits and ensuring our staff have a great place to work,” Pat Brady, chief executive officer of Sutter Roseville Medical Center, said in a written statement.