



Nurses voting on unions at two Reno hospitals

Associated Press

September 25, 2007, 9:49 AM

RENO — Nurses at Reno's two largest hospitals are participating in authorization votes for union representation.

Officials of the National Nurses Organizing Committee/California Nurses Association said at least 30 percent of nurses at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center have signed cards requesting union representation.

That threshold allows for a special election to determine union authorization, and a vote is expected to be held within 40 days, union officials said Monday.

St. Mary's spokesman Josh Charlebois said the signatures still must be verified before an authorization vote is scheduled.

He added that while the hospital would prefer having a direct relationship with employees, administrators don't intend to advocate for or against unionizing.

Meanwhile, nurses at Renown Regional Medical Center began voting Tuesday on whether to switch affiliation from the International Union of Operating Engineers to the Service Employees International Union/Nevada Nurse Union. Balloting ends Thursday.

Representatives of labor groups at both hospitals said nurses want a bigger say in staffing levels and patient care.

The SEIU/NNU represents 5,000 registered nurses in Nevada and 16,000 health care and public service employees in the state.

At St. Mary's, joining the NNOC/CNA would make the nurses part of the 10,000-member Catholic Healthcare West nurses' union, said NNOC director Jill Furillo.