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LABOR SCENE

Two HCA Midwest hospitals will hold nurse bargaining elections

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In the next month, the two remaining HCA Midwest hospitals with union-represented nurses will hold elections intended to remove the bargaining unit.

Lee's Summit Medical Center, which has about 150 nurses, will hold its decertification election Thursday and Friday. The 272 nurses at Menorah Medical Center in Overland Park are scheduled to vote Nov. 19 and 20. Both elections will be conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

The elections at the two hospitals will come within seven months after about 380 nurses at HCA's Centerpoint Medical Center in Independence ousted Nurses United Local 5126 as its bargaining agent. The vote at Centerpoint was resounding, with 226 nurses voting to remove the union and 78 electing to keep it.

Since that vote, the local nurses union is in the midst of a transition to become part of the National Nurses Organizing Committee, which was established by the California Nurses Association. Previously, Nurses United had been affiliated with the health care arm of the American Federation of Teachers.

Julie Perry, a registered nurse and an organizer for the new labor group, hopes the results at Lee's Summit and Menorah will differ from Centerpoint.

"We are cautiously optimistic that the majority of nurses will choose to reaffirm union representation because of the tremendous opportunities with being represented by the largest RN union in the country, CNA/NNOC, instead of the previous teachers union," she said.

Three-year contracts at both Lee's Summit and Menorah expired earlier this year without new agreements being reached.

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