

July 23, 2009

Dear Northwest Healthcare Registered Nurse:

Recently, it has come to our attention that the Montana Nurses Association (MNA) has launched a drive to organize nurses at Northwest Healthcare. In fact, this group has reportedly been holding meetings to interest our nurses in paid union representation and even plans a union meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of soliciting signatures from Northwest Healthcare RNs.

As part of their campaign to sell our RNs on the idea of paid third-party representation, the MNA will likely make lots of promises about what they will try to do for nurses if elected. Here is what we think you should know about the union and their organizing campaign:

1. While union representatives may make promises about what they *"will do if elected,"* union promises are not guarantees. Legally, union organizers have no way of guaranteeing any of the promises they make during a union organizing campaign.
2. While union organizers may tell you that *"you cannot lose anything,"* this is simply not true. Collective bargaining can be a risky process. And, even though Administration would always negotiate in good faith, as a result of collective bargaining you could end up with more – but you could also end up with the same things you have now *or even less.*
3. If the union is elected, one thing that you can count on is the fact that they will want you to pay union dues as a condition of employment, which means you would have to pay dues in order to continue working at Northwest Healthcare.
4. While the union's organizers may try to convince you that collective bargaining is a *"collaborative process,"* this is simply not the case. Collective bargaining is a conflict-oriented process, in which the employer and the union often view each other as adversaries. In the end, what is often lost is the freedom and flexibility nurses, leaders and other Northwest Healthcare employees have to create win-win solutions to problems they encounter every day.
5. While union organizers may promise *"you will never have to strike,"* they have no way of predicting whether a strike might occur. The fact is, when collective bargaining breaks down strikes can occur (as union representatives attempt to force management to agree to their demands). Union led strikes occur in healthcare a lot more than you might think.

Whether you attend the union meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> or not, soon a union representative or some of your co-workers may ask you to sign a union authorization card. If you sign a card, you will be signifying your willingness to have the union as your paid representative. You will also be signifying your willingness to have the union speak for you in collective bargaining with management. Under

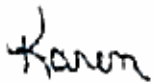
these circumstances you will give up the right to speak for yourself (concerning all issues related to wages, hours of work, and other terms and conditions of employment).

As you know, like many hospitals across the U.S., over the past several months we have been forced to deal with the effects of the current economic crisis. While we understand that this has been difficult for many nurses at Northwest Healthcare, we also feel strongly that unionization would lead us in the wrong direction.

We believe you should not sign anything in support of the union until you have had the opportunity to hear all the facts about unions and union membership and carefully research this topic for yourself. Please don't allow yourself to be bullied or rushed into doing something that may turn out to be wrong for you and your hospital.

In our view, the question of whether or not Northwest Healthcare should become unionized is an important one that deserves attention and dialogue. In the coming weeks, we will plan to meet with nurses to discuss this issue directly and allow you to ask any questions you may have. Until that time, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact your manager, director, or me.

Sincerely,



Karen Lee  
Chief Nursing Officer