

https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/health/nurses-picket-bozeman-deaconess-hospital/article_713e7bc8-7b11-11e2-bb35-001a4bcf887a.html

TOP STORY

Nurses picket Bozeman Deaconess Hospital

JODI HAUSEN, Chronicle Staff Writer Feb 20, 2013



Nurses and labor representatives picket outside Bozeman Deaconess Hospital on Tuesday, Feb. 19. The hospital and the local union will continue negotiations today on renewing a contract for the nurses.

Bu

Adrian Sanchez-Gonzalez/Chronicle

More than 200 people picketed in front of Bozeman Deaconess Hospital on Tuesday to show support for nurses who say they have been bullied.

“They’re like battered women,” said Maureen McGrath, local nurses’ union vice president. “They’ve been beaten down for so long. This is the first time they’ve had the opportunity to feel like someone hears them.”

Carrying signs that read, “If nurses are outside, something is wrong inside!” and “Nurses make it better,” they cheered when people passing by honked.

Union members from as far away as New York and Ohio came out to show solidarity.

“We’re all in this together,” said Billings Fire Capt. Joe Sands.

Bozeman resident Dan Lourie was also out with the nurses.

“The reason I’m here is that’s it’s a serious issue,” the 75-year-old said. “I’m an old man, and I’m concerned with the quality of care.”

Nurses, many wearing red “no bullying” T-shirts, cited several disrespectful incidents.

Union representative Barb Johnson said a human resources manager sent an email to nurses who were late enrolling for benefits. The email said the enrollment period would be extended, but stated “your supervisor will be notified and you may be” subject to disciplinary action, Johnson said.

“That right there is bullying, and it’s from human resources that is supposed to be the advocate for the staff,” she said. “This tells me that this is the culture of the hospital.”

Nurses said they are concerned with patient care, but managers rebuke them, saying, “Well, that’s your job,” McGrath said.

Berating nurses in front of others is also “common enough that we’re out here on the streets,” said Amy Hauschild of the Montana Nurses Association.

Vickie Groeneweg, chief nursing administrator, said Tuesday afternoon she was aware of the incidents and that the managers were “dealt with.”

“When you see something in print like that, there’s no way to know the context or to know the history,” she said, referring to the email.

Nurses have filed three complaints with the National Labor Relations Board, claiming the hospital's employee complaint procedures are illegal and intimidating. Groeneweg said the hospital started investigating the complaints before they were filed, but confidentiality prevents administration from speaking about it.

The union and administrators are scheduled to sit down today and Thursday to re-negotiate the nurses' contract, which expired in December.

The union has asked hospital administrators to address complaint procedures and fix the pay scale that has some new graduates making more than experienced nurses. It also does not want benefits for on-call nurses eliminated.

Groeneweg said she was encouraged by Tuesday's "very orderly and peaceful demonstration."

"Nurses have a right to have a voice and let their positions be known," she said. "My impression is that they want to get this settled as much as we do, and I look forward to a successful two days."

Jodi Hausen can be reached at jhausen@dailychronicle.com or 582-2630. Follow her on Twitter @JodiHausen.

MORE INFORMATION

Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, nurses still negotiating

[Nurses, Bozeman Deaconess Hospital reach tentative contract agreement](#)

[Bozeman Deaconess Hospital nurses accept two-year contract](#)

[Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, nurses reach labor settlement](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

[Everyday People](#) [Photo Galleries](#) [Photos from Readers](#) [Videos](#)

Interior Secretary Zinke announces mining ban north of Yellowstone



Bozeman school bus firm wants \$373K fine waived