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Under-staffing and employee turnover endanger patient safety in UC health care operations

UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL
AND TECHNICAL
EMPLOYEES

CWA Local 9119
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It's been 6 months since the University of California began bargaining a new contract with its 4,600 health care professionals systemwide. They are among 16,000 UC workers represented by University Professional and Technical Employees, CWA Local 9119.

UPTE-CWA and other unions such as CNA and AFSCME, who represent UC health care workers in current contract negotiation, say management's underwhelming proposals won't fix problems of severe under-staffing and turnover that negatively affect the quality of patient care.

UPTE-CWA's team sits down with UC's bargainers again March 1-2 at UC Davis.

"We are passionate about working in an academic health care institution like UC," said Greg Wine, a member of the union's bargaining term and a senior dietitian at the UC Davis Medical Center. "That is why we need to urgently solve the problems that below-market pay and under-staffing have caused," he said.

Wine said UC's last offer in mid-February was "insulting" to health care professionals, who work in a wide variety of dozens of different job titles, including Pharmacists, Nuclear Medicine Technician, Social Worker and Physical Therapist. Management's offer includes:

- a tiny 2% "cost of living" increase that doesn't keep pace with inflation
- no step increases
- a risky 401(k)-style pension opt out that undermines UC's existing pension plan
- insufficient market wage adjustments

[UPTE-CWA's](http://www.upte.org) health care professionals point to under-market wages causing chronic under-staffing and employee turnover that endangers both patients and workers.

"This hospital does not treasure its employees or value longevity," said one health care worker who attended the bargaining last session at UC Irvine. Management's failure to support staff, she added, "increases a patient's length of stay and it wastes money." Instead of hiring enough professionals, health care workers said, UC forces existing employees to work beyond their breaking points, skipping lunch and staying late.

[UPTE-CWA](http://www.upte.org) is one of the largest at the University of California, representing 15,000 workers across the 10-campus, 5-medical center system, including health care professionals, researchers, and technical workers.

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