



HPAE Local 5629 Strike Question and Answer

United for a Good Contract

1. Why are we voting on authorizing a strike notice?

We are committed to winning a contract that will assure that AAC/Sunrise House can retain and recruit qualified, quality recovery professionals.

So far, management has not adequately addressed our key issues in negotiations—staffing, wages, safety, and holiday pay. This bad-faith bargaining has so far prevented us from getting management to agree to the quality contract that Sunrise House workers deserve.

At the same time, management has continued to commit unfair labor practices that deny us our right to union representation and make our already-demanding jobs even harder: increasing our job duties, discriminating against union activists, and changing work rules. To protest management's unfair labor practices and get them to bargain in good faith, we must be prepared to use our strongest weapon — a strike. Under the law, we must send management a 10-day notice prior to a strike. We are voting today to authorize our local officers and negotiating committee to send a strike notice to the employer.

2. If we vote for a strike, does that mean that we will go on strike?

Not necessarily; a strong show of support for the negotiating committee in Friday's vote will prove to management that we are united in our resolve.

3. If we go on strike, won't they just fire us?

We have a legal right to strike. It would be unlawful for AAC to threaten to fire us for exercising our legal right. It is also unlawful for them to discriminate against employees for striking or take any retaliatory action after a strike. They cannot cut per-diem employees' hours.

If we are forced to strike, we will be striking because of management's unfair labor practices. In an "unfair labor practice strike" management cannot permanently replace us.

4. Can union leaders just call a strike?

HPAE is a democratic union; our members vote on strikes. That is why we are voting on Friday, April 28, to authorize collective action up to and including a strike. We will have an important membership meeting on Friday, May 19, before we take any action.

5. Does HPAE have a strike fund?

HPAE has a fund to help union members who have very serious financial problems during a strike. We also have a fund to provide legal, material, and other assistance to a local union that is on strike. Finally, our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has provided financial assistance to HPAE in previous strikes.

6. What do I say to my supervisor or manager about a possible strike?

You don't have to say anything, but the best thing to say is: *"I am supporting my union because AAC continues to commit unfair labor practices and because we need a contract that allows Sunrise House to retain and recruit staff, and provide quality patient care. If you want to avoid a strike, tell AAC to comply with the law and negotiate a contract which addresses these important issues."*

7. My manager has told me that I could be charged with patient abandonment by going on strike. Is this true?

No, in no case is an employee (probationary or otherwise) who goes on strike subject to any charge of patient abandonment. Management has been given a ten-day notice in order to prepare for the strike. As of the strike deadline, the hospital administration is legally responsible for the care of all patients in their facility. The individual nurses are not.

8. I am still on probation; can I be fired for going on strike?

No, as a probationary employee you have the same legally protected right to strike as any other employee.

9. If I go on strike, will I lose my healthcare coverage?

If AAC stops paying health insurance premiums, you can continue coverage under the COBRA law as long as you pay the monthly premium your current coverage for up to eighteen (18) months. As long as your address is current with the plan administrator you will receive notification of COBRA benefits by mail.

10. I work the night shift; what should I do before leaving in the morning on the day of the strike?

Employees on the night shift should contact their supervisor several hours before the end of their shift and remind them that the employees are not responsible for coverage after the strike begins. If necessary, write your report. Notify your supervisor that your report is available and if the supervisor would like it verbally you can give the report right then.

11. I am scheduled to work on the day of the strike; how should I prepare myself?

All members should call the hotline for updates on the strike situation and show up on the picket line 30 minutes before the start of the strike. If you are scheduled to work that morning wear your uniform in case of a last-minute settlement.