

September 9, 2016

To Sharp Management:

As an RN of 15 years at Sharp (Memorial and SMBHWM) I would like to express some sentiments as our negotiations continue at what seems to be a standstill. I am certain most of my thoughts and concerns will be shared by thousands of RN's within various entities of Sharp. Allow me to express what it's like to be a nurse at Sharp. When I started with Sharp as a new grad (but second career/degree) I was over the moon. Sharp was the only place in San Diego I applied; it was the only place I wanted to work because I already knew it was the best place to work. This was 2001. I knew I was going to start at \$16.75/hr, less than my classmates were making at other facilities. The wage disparity was not huge, so I chose a better work environment and Sharp's reputation over money. Immediately, I loved my job and I loved Sharp. I felt incredibly proud to work for Sharp. I recruited nurses to work at SMBHWN, I spoke to friends and the community along with fellow healthcare workers about the amazing place I worked. I was loyal to Sharp from day one.

Today, I still give every ounce of myself to each and every patient. I have seen our patient population change over the years on the L&D unit. Not only have we grown by sheer numbers of patients over the years, our patient acuity has also changed, with more of our patients being obese, diabetic, and hypertensive. Our roles as nurses have changed as well, being given increased responsibilities, tasks, timelines and demands. Most shifts we are understaffed, we miss breaks and teeter on the border of being unsafe with our assignments (that our management, not working the bedside, think is manageable). Many days I leave feeling like I wish I could have given even better care had I been given a break, or had I not been taking care of multiple high risk patients being asked to make it work since staffing was short. Somehow, because I love what I do, I know my patients had no idea how worried I was for them, how tired I was, or how I balanced my care to reflect that they were the most important and I was there for them every moment they needed. Fifteen years later our wages are now far below comparable hospitals in San Diego (averaging \$10 less per hr). In the last few years I have seen excellent, experienced nurses leaving at rates that far exceed what I saw in my first decade at Sharp. I hear this from RNs in many departments, mostly from the more high risk, high burnout units. We are being asked to do more with less, we are not being fairly compensated and we feel less and less appreciated. Despite this, I show up with a positive attitude, take excellent care of my patients, operate on my unit as a cohesive team member and still love what I do. I want you, Sharp management to know, that every single shift I provide the Sharp Experience all day long. I don't do this because Sharp holds a huge, expensive pep rally once a year. I don't do this because Sharp tells me to do so. I do this because I love my job. I love my patients and I love(d) Sharp.

During negotiations I try to remember that Sharp is a business. I try to remember that the panel that sits across from me with stone cold faces and many times demeaning responses are there to do a job. A job they were trained to do- to stand firm, be unemotional, be all business, and attempt to break us down. For me personally, it breaks my heart. Coming from the very entity I have been so loyal to, so proud of and worked so hard for; I am heartbroken. From a moral and ethical standpoint I just cannot understand why Sharp management truly feels Sharp RNs are worth less than nurses at

other San Diego facilities. We keep hearing that our wages are competitive, our turnover really isn't that bad, and that our nurses have more "resources". I, and 4800 other nurses, along with facts and figures that speak the truth want you to know you are wrong. I would ask you to look at Sharp's long term success model as the "best place work" and the "best place to receive care" and realize that ultimately these statements will only hold true if nurses, the backbone of Sharp Healthcare, are treated as valued members of your organization. Please understand every message thus far from Sharp has resonated the very opposite.

With a very heavy heart, I am learning that Sharp Healthcare does not value its nurses. Aside from wanting fair compensation and the safest and best care for our patients, I personally want to feel valued and appreciated. I've been loyal to Sharp for 15 years, and I would like my management to appreciate this. When I hit my 15 year anniversary with Sharp, I didn't get one ounce of recognition. My pin never showed up (until a colleague/lead tracked it down 5 months later after I told her). I did not receive the thank you card in the mail and I did not receive a thank you or any acknowledgement from my manager. Now, through this negotiation time, I realize that all the way to the top of Sharp management I am undervalued and unappreciated. I keep asking myself, "Why do I still work here?" The only answer I have left is, for my patients. I realize now I will have my patients at any hospital. Please hear us when we say enough is enough.

If these negotiations remain at a standstill; if Sharp continues to deny us fair compensation, refuses to bring our wages up to market value, and continues to try to silence our voices, I have but just one question remaining:

Why do you feel we are not worth this?