



THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

CORONA: Hospital Appeals Decision on Nurses Union

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BY IMRAN GHORI

Corona Regional Medical Center plans to continue its challenge to a nurses' January vote to form a union.

The hospital filed an appeal to a Nov. 15 decision by the National Labor Relations Board that upheld the vote by nurses to join the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals, according to a union spokesman.

The federal agency, which oversees labor practices, allows up to two weeks for the hospital to challenge the decision. Corona Regional filed the appeal, known as an exception, on the last day it could, Friday, Nov. 30.

The nurses' union, which had urged hospital management to begin bargaining, criticized the decision.

"Management filing exceptions to the nurses' fair and democratic vote to form a union is just a delaying tactic to prevent the nurses, whose foremost concern is always patient care, from trying to address problems at their hospital," Ken Deitz, president of the union, said in a statement.

Hospital spokeswoman Linda Pearson said she had no information about the appeal and could not comment.

The hospital's filing continues a battle between management and nurses that has been going on for more than a year.

A representative from the National Labor Relations Board was not available Monday, Dec. 2, to discuss the process.

Nurses, who have been critical of patient safety and working conditions, conducted the union vote on Jan. 3 and Jan. 4.

A copy of the hospital's filing was not available Monday, but in its objections it alleged irregularities with voting that included interference by pro-union physicians and appeals to racial prejudice.

In the Nov. 15 ruling, administrative law Judge Mary Miller Cracraft found insufficient evidence to question the validity of the votes and recommended that the election results be certified.

The hospital alleged that at least five physicians -- who are independent practitioners -- made comments to nurses urging a yes vote, stating that a union would protect them. That pressured nurses and interfered with the election, according to the hospital objections.

But Cracraft said those were isolated comments made in casual conversation and she found no evidence that those statements were heard by others or effected the vote.

The judge called it part of the "general mix of conversations" during the period. She also noted that the hospital "campaigned vigorously against unionization" with staff meetings where no votes were urged and nurses shown an anti-union video.

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—Ken Deitz, RN,
UNAC/UHCP
President

What's Next?

By Friday, December 6, UNAC/UHCP will file a legal brief with the National Labor Relations Board in answer to management's exception filing. We hope to have the Board's decision within a few months.

We expect the Board to agree with the Administrative Law Judge and to honor our fair and democratic vote by certifying our Union. We will then make a demand to management to begin bargaining our first contract.