



UNAC/UHCP

United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals

UNAC/UHCP is affiliated with NUHHCE, AFSCME and the AFL-CIO

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Dear Employer:

As dedicated registered nurses and health care professionals of United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP), we are concerned about the recent California Department of Public Health guidance on allowing asymptomatic COVID-positive health care staff to return to work without testing and without isolation.

We urge you, as the employer, to take this historic opportunity to work with us to address the severe shortage of staff available to safely and effectively treat patients amidst this unrelenting COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize that hospitals nationwide are temporarily or permanently closing services because of staffing shortages. However, following best practices and learning from past experiences is the clear path to the safety of our patients, staff, and communities. We ask that you take these three steps

- 1) Reconsider requiring asymptomatic staff who have tested positive to go to work—and thus expose and likely infect patients, RNs, and staff—as well as suffer a relapse and additional debilitating effects during and beyond COVID. Please join the systems that have wisely decided to forego this approach and help sick employees get well and protect their colleagues and patients.
- 2) Seriously address chronic staffing issues—**that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic**—by using time-tested recruitment and retention measures, rather than temporary, over-reliance on travel staff.
- 3) Implement or reinstate paid COVID leave and other enhanced benefits that keep our health care workforce safe as they take care of everyone else.

Now, with the benefit of what we have learned from the current outbreak—in order to prevent further outbreaks, and institute best practices in the event of future outbreaks—we must be diligent and thoughtful in how we encourage vaccination, and how we monitor, test and handle COVID exposures and positive cases.

The 32,000 registered nurses and health care professionals of UNAC/UHCP are deeply concerned for our patients, our hospital, and our communities. We call on you to address our concerns and involve us in seeking solutions going forward.

Thank you for your continued support of our healthcare professionals and our patients.

Sincerely,

Denise Duncan, RN
UNAC/UHCP President