

September 21, 2017

Dear SSM Registered Nurse:

Recently, we learned a union might be trying to organize nurses at our hospital. I am writing today to express my concern and to raise important points for you to consider. SSM respects the rights all employees have to consider union membership. However, we believe that when nurses and leaders work *together* – without the interference of a labor union – nurses and patients are better off. Simply put, we believe *cooperation* is better than *conflict*.

We hope you will consider *all* the facts about unionization and not just information or promises you might hear from union organizers or their supporters. For example, you should know that:

- 1. Union promises are not guarantees:** In their effort to convince you to sign a card or petition in support of the union, organizers (or their supporters) might promise that electing the union will result in higher pay, better/more benefits, etc. It is important to know that unions have no legal way of guaranteeing any such promises. A union authorization card or petition is a legal document – even if signed electronically. In some cases, unions use the cards to actually *deny* nurses a secret-ballot election and obtain representation *without a vote*.
- 2. The union is engaged in a sales process:** Please never lose sight that the union is trying to *sell* you something (i.e., union representation and collective bargaining). If the union is successful, they will expect you to pay monthly dues to keep your job at SSM. The State of Missouri presently has no “Right to Work” law that prohibits mandatory union dues requirements from collective bargaining agreements.
- 3. Collective bargaining is an uncertain process:** If a union was ever elected to represent SSM nurses, SSM would always negotiate in good faith. However, please understand that collective bargaining can be a risky process of give and take and union organizers rarely explain the potential downsides. Through collective bargaining, it is possible to end up with “more,” but it is *also* possible to end up with the same things you already have or even *less* (like lost wages, lower wage increases, less benefits or a loss of things like scheduling flexibility).
- 4. When collective bargaining breaks down, unions can call nurses out on strike:** When collective bargaining breaks down, unions can call nurses out on strike. In fact, in 2004 the union representing 1,700 nurses at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis called a nursing strike which lasted for six weeks. We don’t believe our nurses *or our patients* should ever have to worry about a nursing strike.

Our goal is to ensure our hospital is one where every patient receives the highest quality of care and where clinicians feel engaged and rewarded for their hard work and commitment. I am confident that – *by working together* – we can achieve our goals.

This is a very important issue. We look forward to having an honest dialogue with you about how the presence of a union could negatively impact our working relationship and the patients we serve. As always, if you have any questions regarding any of this information please ask your Director, your Team Leader, a member of our HR team or bring your questions to me directly.

Sincerely,



Lisle J. Wescott | President

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital – Lake Saint Louis