

Have union supporters told you the union will fix staffing?

Union supporters and organizers may tell you the union will improve staffing, but the truth is, many typical union contract provisions can make staffing more challenging.

1 In many union contracts, **managers are prohibited from doing bargaining unit work**. This means that nurse managers may not be allowed to help staff or take patients unless there is an emergency.

2 Seniority language in union contracts often makes it **difficult for newer, lower seniority nurses to have equal access to holidays and vacation periods**. This can make it harder to recruit and retain newer nurses.

3 Union contract negotiations can take a significant time to negotiate – 528 days on average in health care.* **Nurses who would otherwise consider applying for a job at Penrose and St. Francis hospitals may not because future wages, benefits and other contract terms are uncertain.**

4 If the union negotiates seniority on the basis of hospital, unit or job classification, **nurses may be reluctant to move to other units or classifications because they would lose their seniority or may be precluded from moving to other units because they don't have seniority.**

5 Union representatives, who would likely be PSF nurses, generally are allowed to do union business on paid time and **would not be available to take care of patients during this time.**

6 Union contracts **may not allow the flexibility many nurses value in working out individual solutions to their needs, such as schedules for school courses, other jobs and childcare obligations**. This could make it harder to recruit and retain valuable nurses who have other obligations.

7 Union contracts usually result in having to predict wages for several years into the future and may not always keep up with the market. **Currently we have the flexibility to adjust as the market may dictate, as we have done in recent years, rather than attempt to predict wage rates years into the future.**

8 Union contracts are frequently rigid and treat everyone the same. **This could impact the ability to offer rewards based on clinical ladder, to give retention bonuses and to provide pay differentials.**

9 **The possibility of strikes, picket lines and resulting confrontation** including ill will between nurses who have varying opinions **could result in certain nurses electing not to stay or not to apply for open positions.**

*Combs, R. "Analysis: How Long Does It Take Unions to Reach First Contracts?" Bloomberg Law. June 1, 2021.

Ask yourself if the union's promises sound too good to be true.

Get more information about union representation at **PSFfacts.com** (scan the QR code)

