



**Wailuku, Maui, HI** (March 20, 2023) – The people of Maui and Lanai – our friends, our families, our community – deserve the best care we can deliver. We are committed whole heartedly to caring for our community, and for our people: That commitment is why we all work at Maui Health.

One of the key features of working in health care is that many employees are represented by labor unions, who are there to advocate on their behalf. Since its creation, Maui Health has worked cooperatively with the several unions that represent our employees, to help keep our hospitals and clinics the best place to work, and together with our employees, continue our mission of caring for our people and community with excellence. We have so many challenges– from tackling the high costs of care that hurt our families and businesses, to filling staffing vacancies during national workforce shortages, to continuing to recover from the pandemic, and more – it’s more important than ever to work together to help the people of Maui and Lanai.

We live right now in a time of such division and anger, and we see it affecting so many parts of our society. Especially on the mainland, it is showing up as corporate leaders being actively anti-union, accusing organized labor of being a threat. At the same time, some union leaders are increasingly demonizing corporate leaders and corporations themselves, using ugly rhetoric. This old-fashioned approach – with each side treating the other like an enemy – fosters mistrust, and can end up hurting everybody. That’s not who we are, and not who we ever will be. We are nothing without our people. They are our family, our friends, and at times even our patients.

Organized labor has such an incredibly important history of making a real, meaningful difference in the lives of millions of people, all over our nation and especially here. At Maui Health we will always bargain in good faith to reach agreements that honor our employees and serve the best interests of our patients and communities. We will continue to strive to always lift our people up, to be the best place to work, and a place that cares for each other as much as we care for our community.

Given our commitment to working together with labor unions to make things better, the experience over the past nine months in bargaining with the United Public Workers (UPW) has been challenging.

We have engaged openly and positively in contract negotiations with UPW and have reached four separate agreements in good faith, three of which were endorsed by the UPW bargaining representatives and each one was better than the last. It is very unusual for four consecutive tentative agreements between an employer and a union to be rejected in ratification votes of the union members. The proposal that was just rejected, after a very negative campaign against it by UPW leaders, included significant pay increases and other benefits that were improvements over previous offers. Those earlier offers had been strongly supported by the union leadership who had described them as “a significant victory” and a “major step forward.”

This whole process has been chaotic, and it has been disruptive and stressful for our Maui Health community, including the more than 100 UPW-represented employees who have chosen to come to work, as well as our brothers and sisters who choose to remain on strike and who have lost nearly a month’s pay. It doesn’t need to be this way. It shouldn’t be this way.

We will continue to encourage UPW to work constructively with us to end this strike, so we can get all our employees back to work, helping care for our families and our community. We are sincerely grateful for our community’s patience and support during this time.

After four tentative agreements with the UPW bargaining committee, it is not clear where contract discussions go from here. We will continue to seek common ground, and attempt to reach agreement with UPW in good faith. This does not mean, however, that we will necessarily continue to improve our economic proposals. We call upon the union to work with us to find a basis for agreement that a majority of their members will accept.

In the meantime, Maui Health employees and physicians are continuing to work tirelessly to ensure a safe and clean environment for our patients, visitors, employees, and providers. And we all continue to strive to take the best care of our people, and our communities.

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