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**CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION TO WORK TOGETHER FOR QUALITY
HEALTH CARE IN CALIFORNIA**

State's two biggest health care unions to oppose budget cuts that undermine health care and new threats to staffing ratio law

Putting aside a decade of differences, California's two largest health care unions, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the California Nurses Association (CNA) announced today the establishment of a new, powerful cooperation agreement to confront the corporate health care industry and the growing attacks on health care services in Sacramento and Washington.

One of the first priorities will be joint efforts to challenge attempts by the hospital industry to delay implementation or undermine California's landmark law requiring safe staffing ratios for registered nurses and to oppose state cuts in health care services.

"Today marks the opening of a new era," said CNA Executive Director Rose Ann DeMoro, "in which the state's two strongest health care organizations will use our collective voice and influence to protect patient safety and work to promote the highest quality of care for all Californians."

"We're sending a message to every public official, hospital CEO, and HMO in the state," said Sal Rosselli, President of SEIU 250 in Oakland and co-chair of SEIU's national Health Care Division. "Health care employees are standing united for the care our communities need."

Beginning immediately, SEIU and CNA will work in concert to:

- Ensure that California's landmark law requiring staffing ratios for registered nurses in acute care hospitals (AB 394) is properly implemented and fully enforced. Oppose the displacement of other healthcare employees, and support minimum staffing standards for other caregivers.
- Oppose the repeal of SB 2, which requires additional employers to provide health care coverage for the uninsured.
- Support other efforts to expand access to health care for all Californians and to improve the overall quality of care.
- Defend health care services in the wake of California's budget crisis.
- Help all hospital employees in California achieve union representation to work for affordable, quality care and fair treatment on the job. SEIU will support campaigns by RNs to join CNA, and CNA will support campaigns by professional, licensed, certified and other health care workers to join SEIU.

The new relationship between the two organizations will have profound consequences for the public as well as for workers who provide health care, say public policy analysts.

"By working together in legislative and policy arenas, members of both organizations will be a formidable force on health care reform in Sacramento," said Senator John L. Burton, California State Senate Pro Tempore. "Californians who need care and the professionals who provide that care will be better off as a result of this new accord."

University of California Santa Barbara sociologist Richard Flacks praised the “promise of the agreement with its potential for enabling mass organizing in the health care industry, which is essential for protecting the health and welfare of all Californians and for improving standards for the workers themselves.”

“This is a major step for the labor movement and for the quality of patient care,” said Harley Shaiken, professor specializing in labor issues at the University of California, Berkeley. “It’s important for the labor movement because two key unions are now working together which increases their leverage. It’s important for patient care because this coalition will likely bargain effectively for registered nurses and other health care workers, in a way that improves care in the hospitals and clinics where they represent people.”

The California Nurses Association is the largest organization of RNs in California, representing 55,000 RNs in 150 facilities, and the largest independent RN organization in the nation.

The 1.6 million-member Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is the nation’s largest union and the largest union of health care professionals. In California alone, more than 275,000 SEIU registered and licensed vocational nurses, respiratory care practitioners, radiologic technologists, certified nurse assistants and every other type of health care professional work in hospitals, nursing homes, home care and other settings. Contacts:

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With over 90,000 members, SEIU 250 is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in the Western U.S. We represent every type of healthcare worker; including nursing, professional, technical, paramedic and service classifications. Our mission is to achieve high-quality healthcare for all.