



SEIUHealthcare® United for Quality Care

Contact:

Darci E. McConnell

McConnell Communications, Inc.

313.237.0100

313.686.8094

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SEIU HEALTHCARE MICHIGAN FORMED

New union will represent more than 55,000 healthcare workers, be the state's largest

August 16, 2007 (DETROIT, MI.) SEIU Healthcare Michigan, the state's largest local health care union, was formed Thursday, the union's leaders announced at a news conference today.

The new union will represent more than 55,000 healthcare workers statewide, including Registered Nurses, home care workers, nursing home aides and hospital support staff.

"SEIU Healthcare Michigan will be a champion for quality healthcare in Michigan," said SEIU Healthcare Michigan President Rickman Jackson. "Our members are on the front lines of the healthcare crisis in our state, and we'll work endlessly to make sure all Michiganders have access to the healthcare they need."

Jackson and Secretary-Treasurer Marge Faville were joined at the announcement at SEIU headquarters in Detroit by Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm and Lt. Gov. John Cherry.

The move coincides with the formation of SEIU Healthcare, a national union which represents 1 million members nationwide. The union's agenda includes advocating for improvements in the health care system, including putting patients first, providing affordable care to every man, woman and child in America, ensuring long term care for the nation's elderly and disabled population, and higher standards for pay, benefits, training and staffing for health care workers.

"We have similar goals for Michigan," Jackson said, "as we know that many of our workers don't have insurance or adequate coverage to address their needs. That's why we have high turnover in the home health care field and certainly, a nursing shortage in Michigan."

Jackson's goals include affordable and adequate healthcare for nursing home and other healthcare workers; the creation of the state's largest training center and creating a stronger voice for the professions his union represents.

"A quality work force equals quality care," Jackson said.

The advocacy being done by SEIU is not without merit.

According to a 2007 survey of 600 home health care workers done last year by the Feldman Group, 28 percent of home health care workers are uninsured. And the state Department of Community Health estimates Michigan will need an additional 7,000 registered nurses by 2010, and 18,000 by 2015.

The union's formation follows a vote of the Local 79's rank-and-file members. Voting took place over the past two weeks.

"It just makes sense that all health care workers are together," said Joan Ann Jakobi, a registered nurse from Bay City, Michigan. "We can be the leading voice for getting health care for people."

The reorganization plan was previously approved unanimously by the Local 79 executive board, including former President Willie Hampton who retired at the end of June.

Hampton worked for Local 79 for 30 years.

"We're doing some great things with our health care workers, and we're proud of that legacy in Michigan," Hampton said. "Now, we want to do even better."

On the web: www.seiuhealthcaremi.org

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