

SEIUHealthcare®
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3031 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48202
P: 1-866-734-8466
F: 313-965-0422

2680 Vulcan St.
Muskegon, MI 49441
P: 1-866-734-8466
F: 231-726-6764

www.seiuhealthcaremi.org

To the Manistee County Medical Care Facility Administration:

We are the dedicated frontline nursing home workers at Manistee County Medical Care Facility who are committed to providing safe, quality, compassionate care to our patients. We work day and night to take care of the elderly, vulnerable, and immunocompromised because we believe deeply in our mission to protect our residents. It is especially critical to protect all workers on the job in a time of crisis like this. While a pandemic continues to rage in our state and the country as a whole, we are proud that we have successfully managed to keep COVID-19 out of our nursing home. Other facilities in our state have not been so lucky. To date, there are over 13,000 cases and 2,000 deaths due to COVID-19 in our state's nursing homes. Our focus on resident safety demonstrates our commitment to our facility and community as a whole.

As a representation of over 60 workers at Manistee County Medical Care Facility, our union includes nurses, dietary, and environmental workers. All of us have essential roles on the health care delivery team, and we are strongly united to ensure safety and fairness at Manistee. In the past nine months, our union has actively bargained a new contract for all workers in our facility. During these negotiations, we have asked for respect, protection, and pay that values us as vital caretakers in our home. While we have been offered a reasonable wage increase, the increase was part of a package that would strip away many benefits from workers. We cannot accept this offer because we believe it is disrespectful of the work we do in our home. Worse off, these "take-it-or-leave-it" offers damage the good-faith relationships we have with management during these difficult times.

A lack of benefits and living wages also makes it challenging to recruit and retain the workforce necessary to take care of residents in our home. The current wage scale is not competitive compared to other skilled nursing facilities in the region, exacerbating an already deteriorating staffing situation which has left us chronically understaffed during many shifts. Quality patient care is dependent on maintaining staffing levels that allow us to treat all residents, and meeting our residents' needs is challenging when we are understaffed.

As you are aware, Manistee County Medical Facility is the only skilled nursing home in our city, and our citizens value the work we do in keeping their loved ones close to them as they need additional care. We are demanding the same dignity and respect that our patients receive.

Respect us with a contract that pays us living wages without taking away our benefits. We hope that you will support us in our fight.

Sincerely,

Member leaders of SEIU Healthcare Michigan at Manistee Medical Care Facility

Peggy Vasquez
Dietary

Kathy Kott
Certified Nursing Assistant

Anne Rowe
Diversional Assistant