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## Local

### Sutter Health nurses vote to strike again



(Juan Carlos Pometta Befancourt/Special to The Examiner)

At Mills Peninsula Hospital in San Mateo, Judy Gray, right, and Angelica Lisondra vote on whether to authorize a 10-day strike and reject the hospital's last best offer.

Mike Rosenberg, The Examiner

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Current rank: # **9,875** of 10,958

#### **SAN MATEO -**

About 700 local nurses will soon resume a strike after two recent work stoppages that cost nurses thousands in regular wages and forced Sutter Health hospitals to assume numerous extra expenses. Nurses at Mills-Peninsula Health Services finished voting Tuesday to strike for the third time in five months. Mills RN Sharon Tobin, a spokeswoman for the Mills nurses, said this time the strike may last for 10 days. Walkouts at the Burlingame and San Mateo facilities in October and December lasted two days.

The nurses have been without a contract since June and are part of a 5,000-nurse labor negotiation with Sutter Health, which owns Mills and a total of 13 Bay Area hospitals. Nurses from two San Francisco hospitals — St. Lukes and California Pacific Medical Center — will likely join nurses from Mills and the other Bay Area hospitals in the walkout.

The strike will come at a hefty cost for both nurses and the hospital.

Mills administration estimates a 10-day strike would cost each nurse about \$4,500 in wages based on 10 days of work at what they claim is an average salary of \$56.16 per hour. Some nurses have been able to make up for the lost wages from previous strikes by working temporary shifts at other hospitals, Tobin said.

The hospital will have to pay for hundreds of replacement nurses, their transportation to the Peninsula from around the county and their lodging. The exact cost to pay for the strike was not available from Mills or Sutter.

Both Mills and the union that represents the nurses, the California Nurses Association, said there has been no progress in contract talks since the last strike in December. Mills has been unwilling to make any changes to its offer and minor concessions from the nurses have not yielded any results, both groups said.

Issues for the nurses continue to be not wage hikes but better worker benefits and hospital services, said CNA spokesman Shum Preston. Their demands include enhanced nurse-to-patient ratios, lift teams for handling large patients and the introduction of a rapid response team at all Sutter hospitals.

With neither side budging, both groups see no end in sight.

"We didn't hit them hard enough" during the previous strikes, Tobin said.

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