

Healthcare Workers Object to Plan to Gut St. Luke's

CPMC Proposal Would Damage San Francisco's Health Care System

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 25 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Healthcare workers represented by SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West joined dozens of other community advocates at a city hearing on Thursday to voice their concern over a proposal by California Pacific Medical Center to eliminate acute-care services at St. Luke's Hospital.

Frontline caregivers who attended the hearing of the City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee questioned CPMC's claims of financial hardship as justification for converting the historic Mission District hospital into an outpatient center, in light of CPMC's \$550 million in profits since 2002--a figure that includes the operating losses at St. Luke's.

"To abandon one of the key hospitals that serves the Mission District, South of Market, and several other underserved communities in the city is unconscionable," said Alma Perez, a certified nursing assistant at St. Luke's Hospital. "CPMC is too profitable, and St. Luke's too important to the community, for this to happen. They should be working to reconstruct and enhance this facility, not cut it down to nothing."

Community advocates at the hearing raised concerns that how healthcare is delivered in the city is being determined almost entirely by CPMC and its parent, the Sutter Corporation. Rather, they called for a more inclusive process that involves stakeholders from across the city, as well as elected leaders and public health officials.

Several also questioned how CPMC's proposal to unilaterally cut services in the South-of-Market area would fit in with San Francisco's ambitious plans for universal healthcare, which requires coordination among hospitals and the expansion of healthcare services, not reduction.

The 150,000-member SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West is the largest hospital and healthcare union in the western United States and represents every type of healthcare worker, including nurses, professional, technical and service classifications. Our mission is to achieve high-quality healthcare for all.

Website: <http://www.seiu-uhw.org/>