

A Letter to the Community



Last year, Yale-New Haven Hospital and SEIU/1199 signed an Election Principles Agreement that would lead to the approval of a new cancer hospital and would provide hospital employees with the opportunity to vote on the issue of union representation. The election, called for in mid-November by the Union, was postponed in mid-December after an Arbitrator found that certain hospital actions violated this Agreement.

Given the importance of this issue to the City, to the Union, to the Hospital and most of all to our patients and our employees, we recognized that the Hospital needed to run a near perfect campaign. We did not meet that standard and I deeply regret it. Several internal assessments were conducted and we concluded that during the course of the campaign, several mistakes were made for which I apologize:

- Numerous voluntary meetings to discuss union matters were held immediately following staff meetings at the direction of consultants and with insufficient hospital oversight. These should not have occurred and when I learned about them in early December, I directed that they stop.
- Training materials distributed to managers contained a reference to unions' ties with organized crime and encouraged managers to discuss any personal adverse experiences they had with unions.
- Incorrect information about union dues was periodically given to employees. This information was based on the bylaws of the International Union and not local SEIU/1199.
- Information about premium pay differentials and the manner in which employees would communicate with management under union representation was incorrectly conveyed by some managers.

To address these issues, several actions were taken. We terminated the outside labor consultants engaged to advise us on this campaign, and we reassigned the senior leadership responsibilities for oversight of the labor campaign. We hired a new General Counsel and engaged new outside legal counsel to advise the Hospital going forward. We reoriented our managers to the Election Principles Agreement and Federal labor law, and for the remainder of the Agreement, we stopped all voluntary meetings in which union representation is discussed on work time and in work areas.

While we cannot turn back the clock and reverse these actions, we can look forward. SEIU has withdrawn its petition for an election and dropped the unfair labor practice charges they filed against the Hospital.

In response, the Hospital is submitting its own petition for an election to the National Labor Relations Board. While it is an unusual move for an employer to call for an election, we think the opportunity to vote on this issue is critical to our employees. If the NLRB accepts the petition, it will assure that any election is held in an atmosphere free of improper conduct. We hope that the Union, the Mayor and other interested parties will work with us to ensure that such an election can be held.

We offer our appreciation to those who have stood by the Hospital and we offer our respect to those with whom we have differed. At the end of the day, we hope this Hospital is judged on our commitment to our patients, our employees and our ongoing service to this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marna P. Borgstrom'.

Marna P. Borgstrom
President and CEO

20 York Street
New Haven, CT 06510