

Covid Didn't Leave but CES Pay Did

Remember when Omicron was making a lot of people sick, and AHS (Alameda Health System) management finally realized that we deserved to get incentive pay for coming in and covering extra shifts?

Remember how they offered \$18 per hour on top of overtime pay? Even though we know we deserve more than that.

Remember how a few of us took advantage of it and made some extra money?

Good! Because that is all we have now: the memories of when we were getting somewhere nearer to proper remuneration for our hard work. If we are ever going to see incentive pay on our checks again, it won't be because AHS has randomly warmed their hearts, it will depend on us demanding it.

It's Not Just Burnout, It's Trauma

Since the pandemic began, the U.S. healthcare sector has lost about half a million workers according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And it's no surprise – the stressful work we normally do every day has been intensified by the pandemic, with many workers now having PTSD.

In an already broken for-profit healthcare system, Covid has meant sicker patients, longer hours, fearing for our lives, and the stress of trying to do more with less. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been at the frontlines – like soldiers in war – doing what we could without all the resources we needed. That takes a mental toll.

So it's no wonder so many of us are leaving healthcare. The real question is what do we need so that we'll stay? And are we willing to fight for it?

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It's an SAN World After All

One of the faulty solutions for the understaffing problem that management has come up with is filling scheduling gaps with SAN (schedule as needed) or per diem positions.

But this solution makes no sense, as many of us working as SAN would like to work full-time hours and what we really need is more permanent full-time positions.

This is only a solution for management since they save money on benefits and PTO. What we need is a solution that works for the staff and not the budget.

Understaffing Fabricated Chaos

For years we have been complaining about understaffing. Since the pandemic things have only gotten worse, with people leaving due to burn out, getting fired because they didn't get their shots, or retiring.

The solution is very simple: hire more people. But management acts like this is a complicated mathematical equation that only the smartest minds at NASA could solve. The excuses are endless: "we don't have the budget," "people are not applying," "people are not qualified," "we just hired a bunch of per diem or temp positions." And every day the issue remains and only gets worse.

The reality is that management has no intention of solving this, since it is the opposite of a problem for them. The more they understaff us, the more money they save. This is not a problem without a solution, it is a fabricated chaos that benefits management's bottom line of saving money.

