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After 94% Vote to Strike, UIC Workers Deliver Strike Notice to UIC

Chicago - Today, UIC workers (represented by SEIU Local 73) delivered their intention to strike to their employer after being without a contract for over a year. 94% of workers voted to strike. The strike date is slated as September 14. UIC administration has failed to respond with meaningful proposals around issues that matter most to workers including safe working conditions, adequate staffing, and pay increases. SEIU Local 73 has filed unfair labor practices over UIC's conduct during negotiations. There has been no resolution to the claims and the union has moved forward with the intention to strike in its efforts to resolve the unfair labor practice charges and other worker concerns.

"We want to negotiate a contract that acknowledges the integrity of UIC workers. The administration has refused to offer a contract that properly invests in the staff that make the University run," said Dian Palmer, SEIU Local 73 President. "We are standing together. Every job and service workers provide matters. We will use our collective power to win for our families and communities. Workers have voted and they are ready to strike for their lives, livelihoods and the communities served at UIC Health and University."

About 4,000 clerical, professional, technical and service & maintenance workers work at the main campus in Chicago, the University of Illinois Hospital and Health and Sciences System, Peoria, Rockford, Champaign, and UIC Specialized Care for Children. The professional unit went on strike in 2012. The other units have not gone on strike in recent times.

"We continue to face disrespect at the bargaining table, and in our workplaces," said Alicia Uwumarogie, Physical Therapist Specialist at UI Health. "That's reflected in UIC being unable to promise masks and other safety equipment and conditions that we've long needed. Some of our brothers and sisters have died on the front line. They have given their lives for their jobs. And for what? So UIC can ignore our calls for justice?"

"We're here today to deliver our intent to strike to let UIC know that we are done with playing games. We are done with their lack of empathy. And we are done with their lack of respect," said Lavitta Stewart, Program Service Aide at UI Health. "Workers shouldn't be making \$10-12/hour. That's just plain sick. And workers shouldn't be coming into campus worried about contracting a virus that UIC has let go rampant amongst the workplace."

Worker demands at the negotiation table include the following:

- Adequate staffing to ensure safety of staff, patients, and students.
- Proper PPE, including universal masking and N95s in the hospital.
- Fair and equitable pay.
- Increasing the base minimum pay to \$15 per hour so that all UIC employees make at least \$15 per hour.
- Market-rates of pay for every employee at UI Health, UIC-DSCC, and all UIC campuses.
- Improved policies around workload and time off to protect staff from being overworked.
- Protections against outsourcing work to outside companies that have no commitment to the needs of students and patients.

"As a former employee of the University of Illinois in Chicago, I know very well the harsh conditions that many workers are currently working in," said Byron Sigcho Lopez, 25th Ward Alderman. "We should live

by example as a public institution...There will not be peace on this campus until we have proper compensation for our workers."

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 29,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.