

## UE150 Organizes for Safe Staffing in DHHS, Actions win 10% temporary pay raise!



UE150 Rally at Central Regional Hospital on November 3 demanding safe staffing and real raises in the State Budget.

Direct care workers in DHHS will receive a 10% temporary wage increase on their January paycheck, with retro-active pay back to Oct. 1. This is the result of over 10 months of actions by UE150 members across the state. Below is a brief timeline explaining how this was won.

### January – 700 DHHS workers sign petition for “Safe Staffing”

### March – UE150 Meeting with DHHS in Raleigh and demand public records

On March 12, 2021, UE 150 DHHS Council leaders from across the state meet with Karen Burkes (Interim DSOHF Director) and Jonathan Kappler (Assistant to DHHS Deputy Secretary). Workers give many heartfelt testimonies about the difficulties of working without adequate staff on the units. In the meeting, the union also demand information about the turn-over and vacancies at all DSOHF facilities. Workers at Murdoch Center also march to their

Director’s office delivering petition signatures.

### April – Rally at CRH + Meeting with Kody Kinsley

On April 14, nearly 50 workers at Central Regional Hospital in Butner participate in a very successful rally at shift change demanding “Safe Staffing and Hazard pay bonuses”. The rally is covered on a TV station and local newspaper. Days prior to the rally, the UE150 DHHS Council met with DHHS Deputy Secretary Kody Kinsley (2nd in command under Sec. Mandy Cohen), as well as with Burkes and Kappler. The union again pressed on the understaffing crisis.

### INSIDE:

- ★ **State Budget Abandons Workers**
- ★ **End Workplace Bullying**

## 10% Raise (continued)



(Above left): UE150 members rally at CRH on Nov 3. (Above right): UE150 Leaders speak at press conference in Raleigh on May 19.

### **May – Political Action at General Assembly + 2nd CRH Rally**

CRH workers rally again in front of their facility demanding safe staffing in early May. Then, on May 19, DHHS workers from across the state came to Raleigh for the UE150 Annual Political Action Day at the State Legislature and meet with dozens of State Legislators. DHHS workers including UE150 President Sekia Royall and CRH chapter President Rakesh Patel speak at press conference, which is also covered on local TV station. Murdoch Center announces they would begin paying YPEAs in Meadowview Cottage 10% temporary raise.

### **June – Workers meet with CEO, Launch Another Safe Staffing Petition**

Workers at CRH launches their own petition at their facility, which was eventually signed by half of all direct care staff at the facility. On June 3, a committee of 8 UE150 members including nurses from several units meet with CRH CEO Robyn Carr about their staffing concerns and demanding safe staffing and a centralized staffing computerized system.

### **July – Union submits Public Records Request + Expands Visibility + Releases Video**

In early July, after having not received information requested, UE150 submits a comprehensive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to DHHS demanding numbers about position vacancies and turn-over. On July 14, Union information table at CRH recruited over 70 new members, gives more visibility to campaign

for Safe Staffing. UE150 releases Safe Staffing video.

### **August – March from Governor’s Mansion to General Assembly**

On August 12, over 100 people including many DHHS workers march from the Governor’s Mansion to the NC General Assembly demanding safe staffing be included in the State Budget. Workers disrupt a session of the NC House while debating the budget. DHHS worker Jessica Gazso is interviewed by TV news station. Workers continue to sign the petition for Safe Staffing.

### **September – Workers deliver petitions + National Convention**

Over half of all direct care staff at CRH sign onto petition which gets delivered by a group of workers to CEO Carr’s office. Carr responds within 1 week promising further action. A strong delegation of DHHS workers participate in the UE National Convention, gaining further training. UE150 receives public records on understaffing and vacancies and immediately publishes, and shares with State Legislators.

### **October – Leaflet actions + Actions on Legislature + DHHS Announces 10% temp. raise**

UE150 leaders leaflet at facilities across the state drawing attention to budget demands. UE150 leaders also meet with dozens of more State Legislators about public records of understaffing. DHHS announces they will give 10% temporary raise to most direct care staff effective October 1.

# Budget Abandons State Workers & Communities Gives Major Kickbacks to Corporations!

On November 18, 2021, Governor Roy Cooper let workers down by signing a compromise budget plan into law. The plan, presented to him by the Republican-controlled legislature, neglects the needs of working people while prioritizing rich corporations. This budget allocates money for the next 2 fiscal years (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023).



*UE150 Union members at Annual Political Action Day at the State Legislative Building on May 19, 2021.*

With billions of dollars available from the American Rescue Plan Act (\$8.8 Billion), NC Rainy Day fund, and increased tax revenues, the Legislature has record money to make critical investments. Instead, this new budget prioritizes corporations and high-income earners above the health care, education, and the

new trivial pay “raise” is really a pay cut because it will not even keep up with inflation and increased cost of living. Meanwhile, high earners will see a dramatic 20 % decrease in taxes while corporations look forward to paying no taxes at all by 2029. This will cut out billions of dollars in revenue each year for the state budget and

**\$13.9  
Billion**

*Corporate  
Tax breaks*

**\$8.8  
Billion**

*American  
Rescue Plan*

**500,  
000**

*People w/  
no health care*

**\$0  
DHHS**

*Safe  
Staffing*

**2.5%  
\$1,500**

*“raise”  
+ bonus*

vital infrastructure needs of the people of North Carolina.

The State Budget grossly under-funds public schools according to the court order under the Leandro Comprehensive Remedial Plan. By refusing Medicaid expansion, more than 500,000 North Carolinians with no health coverage will not get care for chronic conditions, prevent illness and disease progression and live healthy, productive lives.

The new budget offers a meager 5% raise over the next 2 years for teachers and state workers. It also includes a one-time \$1,500 bonus for most. After failing to pass a budget for the last 2 years, this

significantly reduce futurespending by the state.

As if it wasn't enough, this budget also failed to offer temporary hazard pay to all frontline university and state health workers. Despite historically high vacancy rates in its DSOHF facilities, it failed to offer vaccine bonuses, funding for the recommended Safe Staffing Task force, or future commitments to In-Range Salary Adjustments allowing workers to reach top pay. Meanwhile, the Rainy Day fund will still have \$4.25 Billion dollars by the end of 2022.

A budget reflects moral and ethical choices. State officials have demonstrated whose side they are on.

# Workplace Bullying

*Screaming Mimi*



*Constant Critic*

**AH HAW!**



*Two-Headed Snake*



*Gatekeeper*



WORKPLACE  
BULLYING  
INSTITUTE

Numerous international social science surveys reveal very high rates of incidents of workplace bullying. It has been described as a "silent epidemic". Although there are federal statutes that prohibit workplace incidents based on discrimination and harassment, most instances of workplace cruelty are surprisingly still legal in the United States.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION NEEDED

Unfortunately, there is no legal recourse to the more common types of workplace bullying. Collective action must be taken now by workers and concerned managers.

## CONTROL AND DOMINATION

Workplace Bullying is defined as "repeated health harming mistreatment of an employee by one or more people." The recipient of the social misery is

best referred to as the "target". The one(s) who initiate the conduct are known as the perpetrator(s). The perpetrator can be a manager or a coworker. The abuser's motives are generally control and domination but can be the more severe goal of interpersonal destruction. They are easily able to objectify and dehumanize their target and their manipulation is enhanced by lying and gaslighting.

This abusive conduct is repeated mistreatment consisting of some combination of verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation, social ostracism, work sabotage, exploitation of a known vulnerability. This results in some demonstrable negative health impact and/or unfavorable employment outcome. In addition to the physical side effects from the adverse stress, the repeated degrading, dehumanizing and devaluing nature of the abuse can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, depression, suicidality, and PTSD.



*Do you experience these at work in DHHS?*

- **Shouting**
- **Name Calling**
- **Belittling**
- **Excessive Monitoring**
- **Nitpicking**
- **Disrespect**
- **Intimidation**
- **Constant Criticism**
- **Repeated Teasing**
- **Social Exclusion**
- **Work Sabotage**
- **Retaliation**
- **Public humiliation**
- **Intimidation Tactics**
- **Deliberately Overloading**
- **Threatening Gestures**
- **Unwarranted Physical Contact**

Then you might be a victim of workplace bullying. If so, please report to UE 150

**Employee Advocacy Line 919 695-7930.**

The legality of the common type of bullying breeds invisibility. This invisibility leads targets to blame themselves and allows their shame to silence them. Fear prevents coworkers from helping. The ability to share these experiences in an accepting environment can be of great therapeutic value.

Workplace bullying continues because it is still viewed by some in executive management as an acceptable “managerial style” or “personality conflict”. Everyone knows the “tormentor” is a serial abuser, but nothing is done. Most perpetrators have a protective “sponsor” who is employed above them in the workplace hierarchy.

Management prefers to ignore and move past the repeated incidents to remain “positive” and to avoid conflict. They seem blithely unaware of the significant long-term adverse effects of a work culture that tacitly allows bullies to remain employed. The costs to the



## **Ranked #2**

A mentally healthy workplace was the second most important factor in employees' decisions to accept a new position.

Pay rates ranked #1.

institution which can be calculated are high rates of staff turnover, absenteeism, decreased productivity, increased errors, and litigation costs. Other costs are talent flight, work sabotage, resistance to initiatives, and negative PR.

### **DOES DHHS VALUE “JOY” and “BELONGING” ?**

The most significant institutional cost is the erosion of integrity and the resulting hypocrisy of stated institutional values. It is impossible for employees to experience joy and belonging in a place of fear. A culture where bullying is tolerated, ignored, or even promoted is toxic to the ideals of Teamwork, Proactive Communications, and Transparency.

### **WORKPLACE BULLYING IS A LEADERSHIP PROBLEM**

Both Human Resources and Risk Management know who the bullies are. The sensible and practical conclusion should be that bullies are too expen-

## WORKPLACE BULLYING *(continued)*

expensive to keep. Humane considerations should compel leadership to definitively state that the institution has a zero-tolerance policy with regards to workplace bullying. A psychiatric hospital of all institutions should be in the vanguard in minimizing unnecessary trauma to its valued employees.

UE 150 will continue its advocacy on behalf of all

employees. It will raise awareness and hopefully break the silence and shame around being the target of workplace cruelty. It will discuss sponsoring a bill which could be introduced in the next legislative session. This bill is entitled "The Healthy Workplace Bill". It has been introduced in 31 states (Not North Carolina) and it became law in Puerto Rico in 2020.

Details can be reviewed at [Healthyworkplace.org](http://Healthyworkplace.org).



**SAFE STAFFING NOW!**  
**DHHS Workers Demand:**

- ★ Pre-COVID Staffing ratios
- ★ Safe Staffing Task Force
- ★ Centralized Staffing System
- ★ Expedite hiring
- ★ In-range salary adjustments

North Carolina Public  
**UE LOCAL 150**  
Service Workers Union



### Contact UE150 DHHS Council Leaders

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Patrice Jacobs - DHHS Council Co-Chair & Longleaf Center Chapter President -- 252-360-8890

Dr. Rakesh Patel, CRH/Butner President 919-805-7198

Sekia Royall, O'Berry/Statewide Local UE150 President 919-330-7345

William Young, Cherry/O'Berry Chapter President 919-235-7031

Shanequa Logan, Murdoch Center Rec. Sec. 973-432-0558