

Kern Medical Center

What is a Hospital Authority?

Kern County Board of Supervisors earlier this year assigned CEO Russell Judd to explore creating a hospital authority for KMC, which would require state legislation. To prepare for that possible scenario, SEIU Local 521 members worked with Assembly Member Rudy Salas to craft a bill **just in case** the county proceeds with a hospital authority. By moving first, we made sure we would be in the strongest possible position to support KMC and strengthen its finances.

What is a hospital authority?

The bill (AB 2546) would authorize the Kern County Board of Supervisors to establish, by ordinance, the Kern County Hospital Authority to manage, administer, and control the Kern Medical Center and other health care facilities.

We would fight for language in the bill that protects current contracts and places KMC on the path to success.

If done right, an authority would strengthen KMC by protecting workers while at the same time increasing KMC's ability to compete and improve the quality of services to the community.

Who would be in charge of managing KMC?

The Hospital Authority to be created would have a Board of Trustees appointed by the Board of Supervisors; the trustees would be responsible for overseeing the CEO.

What experience do we have regarding hospital authorities?

SEIU 521 members have done this before. Members of SEIU 521's Monterey County Chapter joined with Monterey County to pass model legislation for a hospital authority two years ago that is the strongest in the state.





The legislation created the option to make Natividad Medical Center - the public hospital in Monterey County - a quasi-independent public agency. The legislation maximizes NMC revenues by protecting all the extra public funding NMC gets from state and federal government; allows workers to stay in pension plan; preserves members' benefits such as seniority, vacation accruals, etc. We would fight to win similar bill for KMC.

Do we support a hospital authority for KMC?

Our priority is to preserve and strengthen KMC as a public safety net hospital that serves everyone in the community. We will support any framework that best meets those goals.

We believe KMC should be here for the next generation; and we need to come together with the community and think through the best strategies that preserve and strengthen KMC for the future, not just to meet the budget needs of 2014.

Will a hospital authority affect employees' pay, benefits?

The current contract protects employees' current pay and benefits. We need to work to ensure that our contract, pay and benefits are respected throughout the process.

What is the process and timeline for this to happen?

Currently there is no specific timeline. KMC's CEO is holding a 6-hour study session on May 12 to lay out proposals.

The state legislature needs to pass the hospital authority bill by the end of this year's legislative session. It will then be up to the Board of Supervisors to pass an ordinance creating the Hospital Authority.

How do we ensure that KMC employees and services are protected through this process?

SEIU 521 members are meeting weekly to strategize a future for KMC.

Employees are encouraged to attend the meetings and engage in any way they can.

We will hold a town hall via telephone on May 8 and another one scheduled for the week of May 12 where we will have important updates.

Stay connected and receive updates by visiting www.seiu521.org/kmc or our Facebook page at facebook.com/kmc4all