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California-Based Union Wants to Increase the Cost of Healthcare Without Improving It

Proposed Ballot Initiative Seeks Support for Measures Already in Place In Arizona

PHOENIX—The Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA), the organization giving Arizona hospitals a voice to collectively build better healthcare and health for Arizonans, is working to analyze the recently introduced initiative targeting Arizona hospitals.

“Healthcare Rising Arizona” is the moniker being used for the ballot initiative group that is California’s Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers (SEIU-UHW).

“This California-based union, famous for picketing hospitals, is asking Arizonans to vote for an initiative that won’t improve their healthcare and will end up costing them more,” explains AzHHA President and Chief Executive Officer Ann-Marie Alameddin. “Moreover, it has a track record of using ballot initiatives not to improve healthcare in Arizona, but to leverage its bargaining position with California hospitals.”

This proposed initiative not only would increase patient costs across the board to cover new administrative burdens in reporting and a mandatory increase in healthcare workers’ salaries, but it also purports making improvements that the federal government, the State of Arizona and leading local healthcare partners are already providing.

For example, Arizona hospitals already pay about 52 percent more than the average Arizona wage, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. Furthermore, the proposed initiative doesn’t include a provision that increases the baseline minimum wage for healthcare workers. Instead, it is a mandate forcing private employers to give raises to all employees, regardless of performance or experience, including some of the highest paid employees.

Another example is Arizona hospitals' track record of improvement in infection prevention and control. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, our hospitals already exceed the national benchmark for the five quality measures identified in the proposed initiative.

Previously, SEIU-UHW has used Arizona to run a ballot initiative regarding the pay structure of hospital executives. The initiative never made it to the ballot.

Arizona Hospitals Promote Healthy Economies:

- Arizona hospitals directly employ nearly 90,000 Arizonans and support the jobs of another approximately 120,000 Arizonans, according to the American Hospital Association.
- In their respective communities, hospitals are often the largest employers and pay competitive salaries and benefits. In 2018, the average wage of a full-time employee at an Arizona hospital was more than $75,000, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services.
That’s 52% more than the average Arizona wage of $49,290, according to employment and wage statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Arizona Hospitals Promote Healthy Communities:**

In 2018, Arizona hospitals provided care for:
- 3.0 million ER visits
- 3.5 million patient days
- 483,000 surgeries
- 77,000 births

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**About the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (azhha.org)**

Now in its 80th year, AzHHA is the association giving Arizona hospitals a voice to collectively build better healthcare and health for Arizonans. As the champion for healthcare leadership in Arizona, AzHHA and its member hospitals explore ideas and take collaborative action at the state capitol, in hospitals and at home to attain the best healthcare outcomes for Arizonans. Through Better Care, Better Health and Lower Costs, we will make Arizona the Healthiest State in the Nation.