



Photo Credit: Hawaii Public Radio

## FMCS RESOLVES CRITICAL WORK STOPPAGE IN HONOLULU, SECURING LABOR AGREEMENT FOR NURSES

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) has successfully mediated a pivotal agreement between Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children and the Hawaii Nurses Association (HNA), following more than a year of challenging negotiations. The resolution came after two FMCS mediators joined the bargaining process in September 2024 during an unprecedented lockout of 600 nurses. Their efforts resulted in a new, 3-year agreement, which was overwhelmingly ratified by the bargaining unit on October 2, 2024.

Hawaii Population Density by County  
Source: 2020 Census - U.S. Census Bureau



## IMPACT, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTITUENT BENEFITS



More than 600 nurses from the Hawaii Nurses Association (HNA), represented by the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 50, began negotiations with Hawaii Pacific Health's Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children in September 2023. Although the parties initially engaged in mediation, they later chose to discontinue the involvement of federal mediators.



After two work stoppages, the employer imposed an indefinite lockout, demanding acceptance of its last, best, and final offer as a condition for the nurses' return to work. In response to appeals from Hawaii's Governor and union and employer representatives, federal mediators from Hawaii and California were brought back to the negotiating table. They worked tirelessly with both sides, starting on September 26, and continuing until a tentative agreement was reached on October 1, ending a 22-day work stoppage.



This agreement comes at a critical time for Hawaii's hospitals, which have faced increasing strain due to staffing shortages since 2019. It has restored stability to patient care, alleviated safety concerns among staff, and provided cost savings for the employer by reducing reliance on out-of-state temporary nurses. These changes will contribute to a safer environment for both patients and employees.

FMCS' successful mediation at Kapi'olani Medical Center positively impacts over 1.4 million Hawaiians across the 1st and 2nd Congressional Districts, and will:

- Relieve hospital strain and enhances patient safety and care with the introduction of Hawaii's first enforceable nurse-to-patient ratios. The agreement advances the retention of qualified nursing professionals, helping the hospital manage high patient volumes and busy emergency rooms.
- Improve operations and return focus to health care services. Hawaii Pacific Health's Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children is the only hospital in the state providing specialty care for women and children, supporting more than 49K emergency department visits in FY23.<sup>2</sup>
- Reduce the hospital's reliance on costly traveling nurses, allowing for a more efficient allocation of resources to further benefit the employer, employees, and the broader community.

“As mediators we were not only grateful for the trust and confidence both parties placed in our abilities to work them through some very difficult conversations and issues, but we are also pleased that the Parties also included FMCS Mediation into their contractual dispute resolution process and agreed to future collaborative training and facilitation of their newly created Joint Labor-Management "Staffing Counsel".”

– FMCS Commissioners Brian Mikel and Jimmy Valentine