

Psych Techs file lawsuit on furloughs

A message from CAPT President Tony Myers

In response to Governor Schwarzenegger's insistence to include 24-hour facilities in his latest furlough-and-cuts plan, CAPT filed a lawsuit today calling his proposal illegal.

In our lawsuit, we argue that the furlough plan violates the federal Fair Labor Standards Act: As vital level-of-care staff, we would be forced to work, but would still take a pay cut and have to take furlough days at a later date. This is our own separate lawsuit in direct response to the governor's actions, and a hearing date will be announced soon.

Our state hospitals, developmental centers and prisons were exempted from the governor's earlier minimum-wage-and-layoff proposal. As providers of round-the-clock care for people with severe mental illnesses and developmental disabilities in these facilities, we were not included in this cutback plan. However, we showed support for our state coworkers by calling the governor and telling him not to harm them or their services.

But Governor Schwarzenegger still wants our bargaining unit to be included in his January 9 furlough-and-layoff proposal, even though we've discussed alternatives with his negotiators and told them it would mean:

- Decreased staffing, safety and continuity of care.*
- Increased expensive mandatory overtime.*
- And, if Prison Receiver Clark Kelso chooses not to participate, a possible second stampede of DMH and DDS level-of-care staff to CDCR positions.*

The governor also wants to eliminate our licensing board -- the BVNPT -- as a cost-cutting measure. We're opposed to this plan and concerned how it would affect California Psychiatric Technology: the national gold standard in MI/DD care.

We are professionals, and we're proud of the jobs we do. But when our clients, patients, licenses and livelihoods are threatened, we fight. The current budget crisis is not our fault, nor is it the fault of the individuals we care for. So I am calling on the governor and Legislature to create a fair budget solution that doesn't harm our staffing and services. And I'm calling on all of you to join me in this fight. Stay in touch with your chapter offices as these issues move forward.

In unity,



Tony Myers, SPT



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