

OUTREACH

● SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023 ●

ISSUE 05, VOLUME 40

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

CAPT's 39th Annual Meeting

Scotts Valley in Santa Cruz, CA

INSIDE:

State President's Annual Report,
Union Awards and Recognitions, PT Scholarships,
and Professional Presentations



Welcome.

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians is a non-profit corporation serving as the exclusive representative of all employees in Psychiatric Technician Bargaining Unit 18 in California State Civil Service. CAPT is also the professional association for approximately 11,000 state-licensed Psych Techs who work in California programs serving people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. CAPT is represented by Lyles, Wiesmann, Pizzotti and Associates, Inc. The *Outreach* is CAPT's official publication and is printed at least six times each year. A digital archive of the *Outreach* is maintained at www.psychtechs.net.




CAPT's 39th Annual Meeting video recap. See full story on page 12.

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 You may contact your state and chapter officers directly. Their contact information is listed on page 4. Be sure to leave your name, work location, and phone number, as well as a short explanation of your issue.



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CAPT's Digital Magazine

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Important Reminders

Audit of fiscal records and annual reports

As a CAPT member in good standing, you have a right to request copies of the State Association's Operating Policies, Constitution and Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, as well as your chapter's CBLs and annual financial report. To obtain copies of union documents, you must complete and sign an Access Request Form, which can be obtained by contacting CAPT Headquarters at 1-800-677-2278. CAPT headquarters will mail the requested documents within one week of receipt of the Access Request Form.

CAPT Board Meeting

The CAPT Board of Directors will meet for its fourth quarterly meeting on December 19 and 20 at CAPT headquarters in Sacramento, 1220 S Street, Suite 100. The meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. (meeting times are subject to change).

CAPT board meetings are open to all CAPT members. For more information or to RSVP, please contact State President Eric Soto at (909) 364-2486 or at eric.soto@psychtechs.net.

Planning to retire soon?

Don't forget that CAPT offers its retired members insurance benefits similar to what it provides its active members. As a retired member, CAPT will continue to provide – \$5,000 in Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage and \$5,000 in Life Insurance – without any age term.

Important: For your insurance to continue after your retirement – for only \$5 per month – you must contact CAPT Headquarters at (800) 677-2278 within 31 days of the last day in the month in which you retired. If you fail to do so, your policy will lapse and cannot be reinstated.

psychtechs.net

Check out our catastrophic leave list on our [website](http://psychtechs.net). Keep abreast of what's happening! CAPT updates its website frequently, making sure you have current information on state, department, and CAPT news, at your facility and statewide.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION
OF PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIANS



State President's

ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting
September 26, 2023





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CAPT State President Eric Soto is a dedicated second-generation Psychiatric Technician and a long-standing member of CAPT. His Psych Tech journey began at the age of nineteen back in 1998 when he embarked on his career at Metropolitan State Hospital. His unwavering commitment and leadership within the California Association of Psychiatric Technicians have been nothing short of remarkable.

In 2005, he assumed the role of Chief Steward for the CAPT Metro Chapter, demonstrating his early dedication to representing the interests of his fellow members. This commitment was further recognized when he was elected Metro Chapter Vice President in 2008 and served as Chapter President in 2010. Eric's exceptional leadership qualities were evident as he served four consecutive terms as the chapter president. During his tenure at Metro, Eric became known for his assertive and unwavering approach to representation. He masterminded and orchestrated numerous picketing campaigns, often collaborating with other bargaining units when necessary.

In 2016, Eric achieved another milestone by being elected as the CAPT State President. His dedication to the organization extended beyond his role as President. Eric devoted over a decade to CAPT's negotiating team, playing a pivotal role in securing four vital contracts between the State of California and CAPT. Additionally, he made significant contributions by actively participating in developing CAPT's Grievance Manager software and the Advanced Steward Training program.

Eric Soto's passion for labor advocacy remains unwavering, as he constantly seeks opportunities to enhance his skills and better serve his fellow CAPT members. This commitment is evident in his pursuit of continuing education in Labor Studies, a testament to his dedication to representing and empowering his CAPT colleagues.

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CAPT is the professional association for approximately 11,000 state-licensed Psychiatric Technicians who work in California programs serving people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.

CAPT is also the elected union representative for Psychiatric Technicians and related professionals working in California state prisons, hospitals, developmental centers and community state staffing homes.

CAPT represents approximately 5,500 members who belong to a state employee Bargaining Unit 18.

Welcome

CAPT Brothers and Sisters, it is an honor and a pleasure to preside over the 2023 CAPT Annual Meeting. I welcome you on behalf of the Atascadero, Coalinga, and Porterville chapters. We hold these Annual Meetings to conduct the Union's official business every year. Delegates from across the state, representing all our chapters, convene to receive vital information on the continued struggles and progress of our organization. In the upcoming two days, our delegates will be expected to listen to proposals to revise our Union's Bylaws and Operating Policies and discuss and vote on the issues during this assembly. We will listen to presentations and receive training designed to enrich our skills in representing our members and expand our awareness of our place in the American labor movement.

Contract Enforcement and Representation

Many have heard me say that the minute a bargaining agreement is signed, preparations for the next one begins. Day in and day out, up, and down the state, our local representatives are working to educate our members on their contract rights. Our local activists engage in the endless struggle to better the lives and working conditions of our Psych Tech brothers and sisters. In the three departments where we are employed, CAPT representatives, working Psych Techs, diligently protect the integrity of our MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and serve as guardians and defenders of the rights we have fought long and hard to secure.

Our CAPT officers and stewards consistently deliver top-notch representation, bringing expertise to investigative interviews and local disciplinary proceedings. Throughout the past year, our local representatives have been proactive in addressing cases of management violating our MOU and ensuring accountability for



their actions. While we are always willing to settle our disputes informally, we must make it known that we are ready and willing to file grievances whenever necessary. Throughout the past year, we have worked with several chapters in utilizing other ways to address our concerns. Any union relying solely on the grievance process is flirting with disappointment and defeat. We need to make those repeat offenders from management known throughout our facilities and institutions; we need to engage our members and be ready to mobilize them when necessary.

Training and Development

I want to emphasize the immense value that activist training brings to our members and the strength it adds to our collective voice in advocating for our rights and interests. To this end, CAPT continues its work in identifying and training union members through our Job Steward Training Program. Whether driven by union activism or a curiosity about the history and role of CAPT in our workplace, CAPT members are always welcome at Job Steward Trainings. CAPT Consultant and Chief Contract Negotiator Ann Lyles and I have completed training sessions for nearly forty CAPT members this year alone.

Beyond the foundational Basic Job Steward Training, CAPT empowers our local chapters with unique training opportunities, enabling them to elevate their ability to passionately advocate for and represent our valued members. CAPT ignites the potential of new officers and Chapter Presidents with New Officer Training and Board of Directors Training experiences. Furthermore, we have seen some of our dedicated representatives eagerly participating in Grievance and Arbitration Conferences to sharpen their skills and expand their knowledge.

At our Annual Meeting, we are excited to introduce special training presentations designed to elevate your expertise and empower your knowledge and skills. Our training offerings include a Grievance Handling presentation delivered by CAPT Attorney Sean Bedrosian and myself, and the law firm of Ford and Wallach will provide a presentation instructing reps on how to help members navigate their Options Meetings.

As an organization, CAPT exercises its strength and maintains its relevancy by being an active member of the Working Assembly of Governmental Employees (WAGE). CAPT sends a delegation to the WAGE Conference twice a year. WAGE is a national organization of independent public employee unions. WAGE is committed to supporting other unaffiliated public employee unions throughout the country. Members of WAGE network and learn from fellow union activists during the conferences, sharing their struggles and victories. CAPT's State Vice President, Paul Hannula, sits on the organization's board of directors. WAGE is a valuable resource, helping independent public employee unions stay independent and successful.

Apprenticeships and 20/20 Programs

In 2006, CAPT negotiated contract-specific funding for a 20/20 program. As many of you know, the 20/20 Program is an excellent opportunity for our members to attend a Psychiatric Technician program, work twenty hours per week, and get paid for a full 40-hour work week. Sixteen years later, CAPT continues to work with the state to promote and encourage CAPT members to take advantage of the program and the wonderful opportunity to enrich their lives by helping them attain more professional and financial security. Coalinga, Metropolitan, and Patton State Hospitals currently participate in the program and have approximately 14 20/20 students.

Throughout the history of the labor movement, the guiding and nurturing of the next generation of members of a trade has been a fundamental part of the survival and success of labor unions. For several years, CAPT has continued to work with the state of California, the Department of State Hospitals, the Federal Department of Labor, and Napa Valley College through a Joint Apprenticeship Committee to educate and prepare Psychiatric Technician Apprentices through a fast-track program as well as gain valuable on-the-job training. The Psychiatric Technician Fast Track Program continues to be a model apprenticeship program nationwide. At the start of the latest cohort, there were 16 Psych Tech apprentices at Napa State Hospital.



BVNPT Prep Course

CAPT remains actively engaged in collaboration with the state through the 20/20 committee, dedicated to assisting program graduates in successfully passing their BVNPT exam. With the aid of Psych Tech Instructors Sandi Garcia from Metro and Sonia Chavira from Coalinga, we are pleased to announce that CAPT is surveying and scheduling another BVNPT Exam Preparation Class in the coming year.

BVNPT and the Psych Tech Profession

As the professional organization for Psychiatric Technicians, CAPT must play a role and take a keen interest in the Board of Vocational Nurses and Psychiatric Technicians. CAPT regularly engages with the licensing board regarding policy, enforcement, and discipline. It is also highly critical that CAPT take an interest in those who sit on the board. CAPT often recommends current or former CAPT members for appointment by the Governor to sit on the BVNPT. On behalf of CAPT, I am proud to report that currently, there are two CAPT-recommended PTs on the BVNPT. These two PT board members are long-time state employees, educators, and former CAPT activists. These two individuals bring something unique and special to the BVNPT. They bring years of experience working with the state, years of service, and sacrifice for their patients and fellow Psych Techs. We congratulate and thank Abraham Hill and Lessie Moore for filling these important seats on our licensing board.

A lingering effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is an overall decline in applicants into medical/health care programs, including Psych Tech Programs. In conversations with directors of Psych Tech Programs throughout California, many report that enrollment numbers have not returned from pre-COVID-19 years. On many occasions, CAPT has expressed willingness to help their recruitment efforts. CAPT plans to begin local outreach at High School Career Days and local colleges.

[The American Association of Psychiatric Technicians](#) (an independent entity of CAPT) continues to aid the certification of Psych Techs or their local state equivalent. In the past year, the [AAPT supplied seed money for a Psych Tech program in Louisiana.](#)





CAPT'S 39TH ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Celebrating Unity and Achievement



State President Eric Soto delivers CAPT's Annual Report

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians recently concluded its 39th Annual Meeting, a focal event in the union's calendar, bringing together members from every chartered chapter across the state. Held from September 26-28 at the Hilton Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley, this year's meeting, hosted by the Atascadero, Coalinga, and Porterville Chapters, was a significant gathering marked by camaraderie, discussions, and recognition of outstanding achievements.

Welcome Reception

The Annual Meeting kicked off on Tuesday evening with a warm welcome reception, where state and chapter officers, elected chapter delegates, CAPT consultants, and honored guests gathered. Returning participants renewed connections, while newcomers seized the opportunity to meet CAPT's leadership, consultants, and other delegates from around the state. The atmosphere set the stage for a productive and engaging event.

Opening Ceremony and President's Report

The Annual Meeting commenced Wednesday, Sept 27, with the traditional opening ceremony, complete with a welcome, an invocation, a roll call, and the recitation of the Psychiatric Technician Pledge. This year, PT Jessica Briggs (Coalinga), a first-time participant, delivered the pledge. State President Eric Soto presented the Annual Report. The report covered various aspects, including contract enforcement and representation, advancing the PT profession, activist training and development, and an update on our departments, including CAPT's successes and challenges. President Soto's unabridged report is published in this Outreach, beginning on page 6.

Honoring Excellence: Making a Difference and Founders' Awards

One of the highlights of the Annual Meeting is the recognition of outstanding contributions through prestigious awards. The Making a Difference Award for Outstanding Professionalism was presented to CAPT State Vice President and Atascadero Chapter President Paul Hannula. This award acknowledges a union member who has gone above and beyond to assist others in medical, mental health, or other emergencies, even at the risk of their own safety. Paul's recognition stems from a remarkable act of heroism on January 9 when the San Luis Obispo county region was experiencing flooding, evacuations, and road closures due to a second wave of thunderstorms and high winds. Paul and his wife, Tessa, encountered an elderly woman whose vehicle had succumbed to the rising floodwaters, leaving her and her dog trapped inside. Without hesitation, Paul trekked through waist-deep waters to bring them to safety. Beyond this immediate rescue, Paul and Tessa continued their selfless efforts by driving Judith and Willow in their lifted Jeep to her elderly home park. The flood water kept rising, so Paul and Tessa waited nine hours before they could safely drive home. Paul's unwavering selflessness and compassion in the face of danger showcased the spirit of the Making a Difference Award.

The Founders' Award for Outstanding Activism was presented to Southern Corrections Chapter Vice President and SPT Joshua Jones (RJD). This award recognizes a union activist who has significantly improved the association regarding visibility, savings, or other actions benefiting CAPT members. Josh was honored for his unwavering commitment, advocating for BU 18 members despite challenges posed by RJD's management. His efforts extend from resolving countless pay issues to enhancing working conditions and safety for PTs at RJD. Beyond representation, he actively recruits members for Southern Corrections and CAPT. In all aspects, Joshua Jones embodies the true essence of a union representative, humbly doing what is right for those who may lack the means or time to advocate for themselves.

Chapter and Special Achievement Awards

Jaime Garcia, CAPT State Secretary-Treasurer and President of the Coalinga Chapter, honored SPT Roselva Rossel with award recognition for her exceptional composure and quick thinking when she assisted a patient experiencing a severe choking episode, promptly performing the Heimlich maneuver. Her swift and decisive actions saved the patient's life. Roselva's selfless dedication in the face of an emergency highlights her commitment as a team member and Psychiatric Technician and leaves a lasting mark on our collective memory that will not be forgotten. Unable to attend the meeting, Roselva's award was accepted by PT Jessica Briggs (Coalinga), a first-hand witness to Roselva's act of heroism.



Jessica Briggs recites the Psychiatric Technician Pledge



Paul Hannula accepts the Making a Difference Award



Joshua Jones accepts the Founder's Award

Officers of the Patton Chapter and its delegation honored SPT Lessie Moore for her significant contributions during her many years as Patton Chapter vice president and her unwavering service during the recent transition in chapter administration. Lessie was honored for her role as the chapter vice president, marked by dedication, leadership, and a keen understanding of the intricacies of the union. Her efforts exceeded the call of duty, providing crucial information and guidance before and during the chapter's administrative transition. It was evident that Lessie's involvement in CAPT was not driven by personal gain but by a genuine dedication to the well-being of all Patton members.



The State Association acknowledges a chapter treasurer for their consistent, thorough, and punctual submission of monthly accounting records. In recognition of exceptional financial reporting and adherence to chapter accounting guidelines and requirements, this year's award was presented to Ruben Mendez, Treasurer of the Northern Corrections Chapter.



Membership recruitment awards are given to those chapters with the highest membership. The Metro Chapter secured first place, the Coalinga Chapter in second place, and the Southern Corrections Chapter in third place. Awards for the greatest improved membership were presented to the Atascadero Chapter with an overall improvement of 4.8 percent, followed by the Northern Corrections Chapter at 2.5 percent. Currently, the association's overall membership is at 90.7 percent.



Special Presentation: 'Effective Grievance Handling'

The Annual Meeting agenda also features professional presentations to equip members with valuable information and skills relevant to union activities, labor rights, and activism. State President Eric Soto and CAPT Attorney Sean Bedrosian joined forces to deliver a session on 'Effective Grievance Handling.'



"We aim to offer you practical tips and strategies for navigating the grievance filing process," expressed Eric. "Our goal is to equip you with the essential tools and insights to bolster the strength of your grievances, approach them with analytical understanding, and empower you with the ability to mobilize and organize your workplace effectively."

CAPT Attorney Sean Bedrosian encouraged our CAPT activists to utilize our rights under the Dills Act to our advantage, to use Information Requests strategically, and always keep in mind the critical principle of the "Equality Rule," meaning, when acting in their union capacity, a job steward is on equal footing with management.

Eric and Sean emphasized the importance of addressing grievances collectively to foster a stronger and more united front. Other topics discussed included Duty of Fair Representation, grievance process and procedures, and critical time frames. Attendees left the session empowered to navigate the complexities of grievance handling with a renewed sense of confidence

Special Presentation: 'Navigating the Workers' Compensation System'

Scott Ford, Lead Partner and Attorney at Ford and Wallach, made our state's workers' compensation system come alive. Ford's interactional approach turned what could be a routine talk into an engaging experience, more like a classroom discussion than a lecture. Ford covered key workers' comp topics, including medical treatment, disability differences, work-related injuries (including psychological ones),



monetary awards, return-to-work incentives, and job retraining vouchers. He also explained permanent disability and the system's death benefits. Ford's teaching style kept the group involved. He shared stories and examples, making the concepts relatable to Psych Techs and their unique experiences.

Association Business: Consideration of Resolutions

Each Annual Meeting allows chapter officers and delegates to witness and participate in the association's general business. The delegates spend much of their time hearing, debating, and voting on proposed resolutions that seek to establish or amend the language by which the association is governed. This year, the delegation considered six proposed resolutions, some of which included the order of business for CAPT board meetings, setting political action principles, and differentiating between side letters and local agreements negotiated between the union and our employer.

CAPT's Annual Meeting is more than just an event—it is a respected tradition focused on celebrating Psych Tech unity and accomplishment. The Annual Meeting reinforces CAPT's core mission: to promote Psych Tech professionalism, activism, and representation in the workplace.

PSYCHTECH STUDENTS RECEIVE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, CAPT increased the amount of its scholarships and awarded ten Psych Tech students financial awards through CAPT's popular scholarship program, each in the amount of \$1,000.

Now in its 19th year, the program helps defray costs for students pursuing their Psychiatric Technology educations. Scholarships are awarded to CAPT members, students who are related to a CAPT member or who are residing in a member's home.

In 2014, CAPT's Board of Directors voted to name the union's annual scholarship program the **Anthony Myers Memorial Scholarship Program** in honor of CAPT's late state president who passed away January 1, 2014. Tony was dedicated to the education of Psych Techs and instrumental in establishing CAPT's scholarship program.

Thanks go out to this year's Scholarship Committee members: Eric Soto, CAPT state president; Kimberly Souza, Northern Corrections Chapter president; Chuck Garcia, Metropolitan Chapter president; Gloria Benard, Patton Chapter secretary; and CAPT Consultant Carol Wiesmann.

Scholarships are funded through a grant from the American Association of Psychiatric Technicians, which provides certification services for mental health workers in the 46 states that do not license Psych Techs. To date, AAPT has generously contributed more than \$62,725 toward CAPT's program, which has awarded more than 214 scholarships.

The 2024 application process begins next spring, so be on the lookout for information.

Congratulations to this year's recipients!



RECEIPIENTS

(Listed Alphabetically)

Column One

Johnathan Daniels

– Cypress College

Ley Ann Doble

– Napa Valley College - *Apprentice*

Jessica Frasier

– Cuesta College

Rosa Garcia-Tapia

– Porterville College

Maricela Hernandez Macias

– Mt. San Antonio College

Column Two

Harvin John Nino Mallare

– Napa Valley College - *Apprentice*

Salvador Martinez

– Napa Valley College - *Apprentice*

Cindy Ivy Ramos

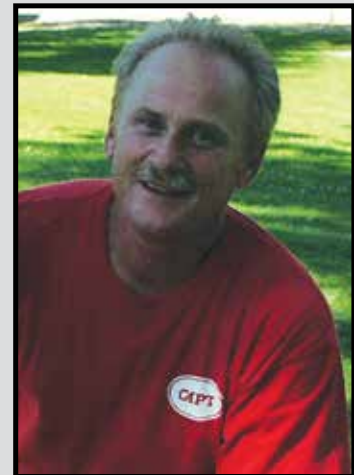
– Napa Valley College - *Apprentice*

Alexa Ramos Trelles

– Cuesta College

Felicia Wingate

– Mt. San Antonio College



The Memorial Scholarship Program's namesake, Anthony Myers, was first elected as state president in 2000. He continued to be re-elected and held office through 2013.

Want to be a Job Steward?

2024 marks an election year

To be eligible to run for CAPT office, you must be a CAPT member who has completed job steward training by January 1, 2024.

CAPT invites members ready to understand our union and contract rights to join steward training—an opportunity open to all CAPT members who want to be better informed or to take on an activist role as a job steward.

Stewards help employees resolve all kinds of job-related problems and concerns. They work to solve problems informally if they can. But sometimes, it involves filing grievances over contract violations or complaints about other issues. Stewards may also provide representation in parts of the adverse action process.

The more stewards we have, the better. That's why we need you! Stewards aren't just contract enforcers and

grievance handlers but also grassroots leaders for change. Stewards work with chapter officers on issues facing our bargaining unit, the individuals we care for, and our services.

Becoming a job steward begins with completing a training session. If you are not a CAPT member, you may still attend a training session by signing a membership application.

To attend a Job Steward training session, promptly connect with your local chapter president. Training sessions are scheduled throughout November and December.



Porterville Chapter hosts member luncheon

The Porterville Chapter celebrated a spirited Membership Appreciation Day on September 1, promoting camaraderie and gratitude.

Members enjoyed delicious tacos while savoring the spirit of unity. Excitement peaked with a CAPT swag raffle, adding an element of fun to the event. The day was a resounding success, strengthening the bond among members and showcasing CAPT's commitment to appreciating and acknowledging its dedicated members.



Department of Developmental Services

The Department of Developmental Services continues to expand its STAR homes throughout California. STAR stands for Stabilization Training Assistance Reintegration. STAR homes fall under the umbrella of three regional programs—Northern, Central Valley, and Southern. STAR’s primary mission is to serve adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities who receive regional center services. These individuals require time-limited (up to 13 months) personalized support and crisis stabilization services to enable their transition toward community living. The Department is preparing to open two new homes, one in Northern California and one in the Central Valley. The Northern STAR 3 home is in Vacaville and will serve children ages 7-12. The Central Valley STAR 2 home in Porterville will be a 5-bed Community Crisis Home serving adults ages 18 and older. While CAPT is pleased to report on the growth of the STAR home program, staffing the STAR homes has become an issue. To address these staffing shortages, CAPT submitted a proposal for a Recruitment and Retention stipend to better retain and attract Psych Techs to these vacant positions.



Northern Star 1, Vacaville, CA



Department of State Hospitals

The Department of State Hospitals is currently the biggest employer of Psych Techs among the three departments. Psychiatric Technicians in DSH play a crucial role in nearly all aspects of patient care at our state hospitals. DSH has approximately 4,000 Bargaining Unit 18 positions; of those, approximately 3,028 are filled. This amounts to nearly 1,000 Bargaining Unit vacancies or a 24% department-wide vacancy rate.

CAPT secured Recruitment and Retention pay (R&R) for four of the five state hospitals based largely on vacancy rates. After nearly one year of the R&R being in effect, the vacancy rates are getting worse. Upon the initial implementation of the R&Rs, CAPT had forewarned that the allocated amount would prove insufficient. Consequently, CAPT proposed a substantial increase in the R&Rs. Simultaneously, CAPT is reactivating our 9.4 staffing committee in collaboration with DSH to investigate and recommend more flexible schedules aimed at attracting and retaining Psych Techs.

In previous years, the State had only occasionally turned to external Contract Registries for staffing needs. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all three departments significantly increased their reliance on contract registries. The registry's lure of better pay in the short term has led to staffing turnover and instability, compromising the quality of services provided.

Throughout the pandemic, the state's dependence on contract registries might have been seen as a necessary evil, but this continued reliance is exacerbating our staffing crisis. It's not just a disservice; it's a profound injustice to our hardworking brothers and sisters in state service, who have persevered with the State through challenging times.



Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/California Correctional Health Care Services

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) implemented a reimagined staffing model, which has been considered by many to be an utter disaster. The departments looked to staff their Psychiatric Inpatient Units (PIPs) with Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) instead of PTs. Psych Techs in those PIPs had previously cautioned that there would be insufficient CNAs willing to fill these roles and that eliminating Psych Techs would lead to a decline in the quality of mental health care. As the plan to phase out Psych Tech positions was implemented, many Psych Techs, reacting logically to the impending phase-out, sought new opportunities elsewhere. With the departure of Psych Techs from the PIPs, the department initiated a PIP Retention and Recruitment (R&R) program to retain Psych Techs.

Our Corrections chapters continue to fight and advocate for our members from Pelican Bay down to the Mexican border. Our reps continuously contend with a management structure that has long used an authoritarian management style. Currently, Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility (RJD) and California Institution for Women (CIW) have been placed on Red Tag status by CAPT, which warns prospective applicants that those facilities engage in questionable labor practices, readily violate the contract, and do not work cooperatively with the union to address issues. In the past year, the California Medical Facility (CMF) was removed from Red Tag status after a change in key management. The change in management at CMF has led to a more open and cooperative relationship with CAPT representatives.



Red-Tagged facilities RJD in San Diego, CA (left) and CIW in Chino, CA (right)

CAPT corrections chapter presidents and consultants have actively engaged with a 4.9 Joint Committee to tackle payroll errors and late payments. These collaborative efforts have notably contributed to an enhanced track record of our members receiving their pay promptly and accurately. Although we have made substantial progress, there are lingering challenges that CAPT must address to guarantee consistent, accurate, and timely payments for our members. With the approval of the Board of Directors, CAPT has moved to reopen negotiations with the State regarding Article 4.9, Timely Payment of Wages.

Like our other departments, several institutions are struggling with low staffing levels due to unfilled Psych Tech positions. RJD and California State Prison-Sacramento (CSP-Sac) are the two most problematic places. CAPT has proposed an R&R initiative at both locations to retain and attract PTs.

Due to California Proposition 57, CDCR has been required to release inmates with a less rigorous approval process than before. This change has resulted in a higher frequency of inmate classification adjustments and inmate transfers and releases, which, in turn, has led to the closure of some units and, in certain instances, the subsequent reopening of these units just a few months later.

A Growing and Common Threat?

A common threat facing Psych Techs and labor organizations is the continuing use of outside contract registries. The State is attempting to employ non-union, "temporary" workers to fill staffing vacancies that we have warned them about for years. The State is entering into contracts with vendors/companies for large sums of money to provide a laundry list of staff from varying classifications to cover their shortages.

These companies offer "health care mercenaries" higher hourly pay rates but at the cost of long-term benefits. They also provide the option for voluntary overtime, eliminate mandatory overtime, and offer flexible scheduling.

Despite experiencing staffing shortages, the State relies on contract registries offering higher short-term compensation. Consequently, the State is puzzled by its inability to attract more permanent staff. Although the State has initiated Retention and Recruitment (R&R) efforts to retain and draw in Psych Techs, it continues to rely on contract registries, undermining the efficacy of its R&Rs.

These actions evoke the age-old adage: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result."

CAPT is actively addressing this concern through multiple avenues. One focus is on our contract provisions outlined in Article 5.1, stipulating that overtime must be offered to state employees before external contractors. CAPT's attorney, Sean Bedrosian, is actively challenging the State's rationale behind these significant mercenary contracts. Furthermore, CAPT's lobbyist, Coby Pizzotti, and I are collaborating on potential legislative solutions to restrict the State's reliance on contract employees.

Moreover, we are actively engaging with members of other labor organizations to discover mutual concerns and shared goals, aiming to unite our efforts effectively in addressing this issue.

A Growing Labor Movement

Over my years of study and union work, I have often heard comments lamenting the decline of the American labor movement. Those attempting to justify their apathy and refusal to participate in the movement have often talked about unions not being what they used to be and talk of unions having outlived their purpose. I have never subscribed to any such sentiment. As a matter of fact, my grandfather (who was a career union man) used to have an entirely appropriate saying. "Eso es un monton de mierda!"



In September 2022, employer compensation costs for private industry union workers averaged \$53.20. Compensation costs for nonunion workers averaged \$38.37. Healthcare benefits were available to 96% of union workers compared to 69% for nonunion workers. In union sectors, employers picked up, on average, 80% of healthcare costs versus nonunion employers only covering, on average, 65% of premiums.

This country has seen a level of union activism and job actions not seen in decades. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2022, there were 23 major work stoppages involving over 120,600 workers; of these workers, 106,300 were in education and health service sectors. The National Labor Relations Board reports that the number of union representation elections increased by 60% in 2022. If you follow the news, the WGA and SAG-AFTRA are engaged in a strike against movie studios and streaming platforms. Workers across the country are organizing and mobilizing. Workers throughout the land are learning what CAPT members have known for years. Union membership counts. Cooperative action matters. Solidarity can move mountains.

Unions are the mechanism by which workers forge a powerful alliance bound by a common purpose and a shared vision. In unity, brothers and sisters become a formidable force, possessing the power to challenge the workplace hierarchy, tirelessly advocating for a workplace that is not only fair but just.

Workers nationwide are awakening to the realization that the path to justice is fraught with challenges, a struggle that may span generations. We must all acknowledge that the struggle and journey are as important as the destination.

As sure as I draw breath, CAPT will be here.

Solidarity Forever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W. J. H.', written in a cursive style.