

Local

A-2 — Saturday, June 5, 1993 — Santa Cruz Sentinel

Nurses serve Dominican with strike notice

By KATHERINE EDWARDS
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — With negotiations at impasse, Dominican Hospital nurses gave notice Friday that they intend to strike.

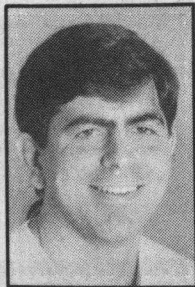
Nurse negotiators handed Sister Julie Hyer, hospital president, the formal 10-day warning at a brief meeting outside the hospital's main entrance.

"We've come to the conclusion that the hospital wants to see a strike," said Tom Landig, a member of the nurses' negotiating team. "We're prepared to go to the next step if that's what it would take to get a decent contract."

The earliest nurses could strike is 7 a.m. on June 15, when about 30 to 40 night nurses come off shift, Landig said.

First, the 400 eligible nurses will vote Thursday on whether to go ahead with a strike or accept the hospital's offer, he said.

The nurses voted a year ago to join the California Nurses Association. They have yet to sign a contract



'We're prepared to go to the next step if that's what it would take to get a decent contract.'

— Tom Landig, nurses' negotiating team

with the hospital.

After nearly three dozen negotiating sessions, the two sides have agreed on some wage increases and additional health benefits.

But three key stumbling blocks remain — the length of the nurses' contract, their pension plan, and agency shop status.

Agency shop status would give nurses the choice of joining the union or contributing the equivalent \$400 to \$500 in dues to a non-profit agency. The hospital has steadfastly rejected the proposal.

A federal mediator was called in, but after two meetings he adjourned the talks, saying the impasse needed to be taken to a "higher authority."

For the nurse negotiators, that meant meeting Wednesday and Thursday with nurses who supported issuing the strike notice.

For hospital negotiators, it meant returning to the board of directors, who had authorized the hospital's final offer, said Dominican spokeswoman Penny Jacobi.

Roger Hite, Dominican's chief operating officer, said Friday he doesn't expect a new offer to be authorized by the board before the strike deadline. "I don't see that on the horizon at the moment," he said.

Representatives from both sides said they are willing to continue talking, but only if the other gives ground on the agency shop issue.

"It's fair to say both sides are waiting for the other side to move on that issue," said Hite.

In the meantime, the hospital is going ahead with plans to hire out-of-area nurses to replace those who strike. Dominican's own nurse managers, supervisors and charge nurses will still head the hospital's different units, said Hite. "We expect minimal transition problems," he said.