



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Safety Now! Coalition To Protest Violence at Metropolitan State Hospital

Workers Will Tell Department of Mental Health That All Patients and Staff Deserve to be Safe!

WHAT: The Safety Now! Coalition will stage a protest at the main entrance of Metropolitan State Hospital, a California Department of Mental Health inpatient facility located 15 miles from downtown Los Angeles. More than 100 Metropolitan workers will demand that DMH address the problem of violence at all of its five hospitals, not just at Napa State Hospital, where one worker was killed, and several other patients and staff have been critically injured as a result of attacks. On Thursday June 30th, a Metropolitan worker was taken to Whittier Presbyterian Hospital by ambulance after being assaulted by a patient.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 6, 2011 from 11 am until 1 pm. Speakers will begin at 12 noon.

WHERE: Main Entrance, Metropolitan State Hospital, 11401 Bloomfield Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. Norwalk is approximately 15 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles.

WHO: The Safety Now! Coalition (consisting of DMH workers represented by the American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME Local 2620), Service Employees International Union (SEIU 1000), the California Association of Psychiatric Technicians (CAPT) and the Union of America Physicians & Dentists (UAPD)), community members, patient advocates, and others will participate in the rally.

BACKGROUND: More than eight months after the murder of psychiatric technician Donna Gross at Napa State Hospital, DMH has done little to improve safety in its Napa facility. But DMH has done even less to improve safety in its four other mental hospitals, despite the fact that several, including Metropolitan State Hospital, share Napa's high rate of violent assaults. On Thursday June 30th, a Licensed Vocational Nurse working at Metropolitan was taken by ambulance to Whittier Presbyterian Hospital after being attacked by a patient, and two psychiatric technicians were injured in a separate assault. Workers at Metropolitan are demanding that DMH immediately implement basic safety measures in their workplace as well as at Napa State Hospital.

VISUAL/AUDIO: More than 100 workers and others will chant and march with picket signs in front of the Metropolitan State Hospital entrance. At noon several Metropolitan workers will describe their workplace injuries and demand that DMH make safety improvements at each of the State's mental hospitals, not just at Napa State Hospital. Workers from Napa State Hospital will also be at the rally to speak in support of their colleagues at Metropolitan.