



SCAM SHEET

March 16, 2001 — #64

\$500,000 Pay Raise?

How does a half-million dollar pay raise sound to you? Apparently, it sounded just fine to Robert Montgomery, who began serving as Sutter's Western Division President in 1996 after a stint as the CEO of Alta Bates Medical Center.

Sutter's tax returns indicate that Montgomery earned \$591,281 in 1998 as president of the Western Division. The following year, Montgomery's title is listed as "Special Project Executive" with a compensation of \$1,101,048.

So what does a "Special Project Executive" actually do? Good question. And is it worth another half-million dollars? If anyone knows, contact the *Scam Sheet*.

Hospital Slammed by JCAHO

Sutter's Summit Medical Center received bad news from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), which published the results of its most recent survey of the facility. Summit received an overall score that placed it among the bottom 2% of hospitals across the nation. JCAHO also downgraded Summit's status to "Conditional Accreditation," leaving it only one level above non-accreditation.

Healthcare workers at Summit have long complained about problems at the Oakland hospital, especially inadequate staffing levels. The fact that JCAHO, which is widely considered to

be soft on hospitals in its surveys, issued Summit such a low score is an indication that the hospital has serious problems. JCAHO inspects hospitals once every three years and issues a set of scores that measures each hospital's performance. The organization is the accrediting body for 11,000 hospitals and home health care organizations across the country.

After JCAHO published Summit's survey scores, hospital workers asked Summit officials for the full survey results. When the officials refused to hand over the results, workers appealed to the federal government's National Labor Relations Board, which ruled that the hospital must make the results available to employees.

Summit officials are now refusing to comply with the NLRB's directive. Why? Apparently, Sutter officials are highly embarrassed by its content. According to JCAHO, the "management" score "reflects an evaluation of the chief executive officer's management functions. Surveyors assess whether a qualified chief executive officer manages the hospital's operations, and whether the chief executive officer has taken steps to keep the hospital in compliance with applicable law and regulation; has established clear lines of responsibility and accountability within departments; and has established internal controls to safeguard physical and financial information and human resources."

Summit also received the lowest possible score for "strategic planning," which evaluates "the mission, vision, and values of the hospital; strategic and other plans for carrying out the hospital's mission; patient care services that are responsive to the needs of the community; and the allocation of human and other resources." One can only imagine the

sorts of embarrassing details contained in the full report.

Sutter's Safe-Staffing Contradictions

Last week, the *Scam Sheet* reported that Sutter is the only major hospital corporation in Northern California that refuses to adopt a safe staffing system. Twenty-five hospitals have already implemented the system, including hospitals owned by Kaiser Permanente, Catholic Healthcare West, Alameda County and independent providers such as Washington Hospital and Chinese Hospital.

Sutter's refusal to adopt the system appears even more ridiculous given that, last year, it agreed to implement a joint labor-management staffing committee in one large department at Alta Bates Medical Center. The agreement, which was negotiated by Sutter's Assistant General Counsel with SEIU Local 250, provides that if the committee cannot reach an agreement on staffing issues, the matter can be submitted to an arbitrator for a final and binding decision. In recent negotiations with Local 250, Sutter negotiators were unable to reconcile how the company could agree to establish a committee with third-party resolution in one department, but not permit similar committees in other areas or hospitals.

In order to address short-staffing problems, caregivers at six Sutter hospitals have proposed that each facility establish a joint committee composed of equal numbers of frontline caregivers and hospital managers where committee members would work together to reach staffing solutions that work for patients and the hospital. In the event that the committees become deadlocked on an issue, a neutral healthcare expert would settle the difference through binding arbitration.

The Sutter Scam Sheet is published by the Health Care Workers Union, Local 250 SEIU, to update elected officials, regulators, District and Community hospitals, industry insiders, consumers, labor unions and other healthcare purchasers about our campaign to Stop the Sutter Scam.

Local 250 is headquartered in Oakland. Call us at 510.251.1250, Visit our web site www.seiu250.org

