

FAQS

What does it mean that UMPNC filed for an election and who is MERC?

MERC, the Michigan Employment Relations Commission, is the government agency in Michigan intended to “give workers a greater voice in their workplace.” MERC will be responsible for handling the election proceedings. Its efforts were initiated in this case because the University of Michigan Professional Nurse Council filed a form indicating that it wanted to be represented by only UMPNC.

When we get to an election, is it handled by MERC?

Yes, the supervision and direction of the election will be overseen by a board agent. We are not sure yet whether the election will be conducted by mail, but we do know that MERC will ensure that the **Michigan Nurses Association/National Nurses United will have no opportunity to interfere with the election.** This is a government-run election.

How long will the election process take?

The process **should be** relatively quick, and we could have an election later this spring, provided both the university and MNA/NNU consent to an election. But, with **\$4.3 MILLION A YEAR** at stake for MNA/NNU, we anticipate they will dispute anything and everything to drag the process out. It’s what they did in Muskegon when over 800 nurses at Mercy Health Hackley had to wait for months while MNA challenged a variety of issues before and after the election. Ultimately, MNA lost to another union, the Service Employees International Union, that nurses believed could better represent their interests, even though the nurses at Hackley belonged to MNA for over 40 years.

What to expect in the coming months?

NNU is famous for swarming workplaces and harassing nurses. We predict that you will be getting many calls and texts from nurses and organizers from Okemos and California; \$4.3 million is a lot to lose, and they are going to be desperate to get in front of you and plead their case. So you can expect many texts, emails, mailers and rounding (even in a pandemic!).

Remember, they are not your nurse colleagues who work at the bedside with you—they don’t care about what happens in Ann Arbor, except for the money we send.

Can we expect more of the same from MNA/NNU and the university?

Make no mistake, the university has been complicit in this process, providing every advantage to MNA/NNU, recognizing it will be easier to control the union in Lansing than to address issues with the UMPNC here in Ann Arbor. There is a reason that MNA is now being called “Company Union.” **MNA/NNU will try everything to avoid an election and not let nurses have a vote to determine who will be our union.** You can expect MNA/NNU to continue making promises of benefits, threaten you with the loss of your contract, deliberately misrepresent material facts and continue to run a deceptive campaign. This has been their MO.

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Can we expect more of the same from MNA/NNU and the university?

UMPNC says the contract stands. The university says the contract stands.* Judge Cynthia Diane Stephens agrees the contract stands. So, who would threaten the legitimacy of the contract? If the employer, the judge and the union agree the contract will stand, who would invalidate the contract?

** “No matter what occurs with these groups, Michigan Medicine—and I—will continue to advocate for your safety and to provide a positive work environment conducive to providing excellent nursing care. **We will continue to honor both the current collective bargaining agreement as well as the new agreement beginning July 1, 2021.**” —Jan. 4, 2021, e-mail from Nancy May, chief nurse executive for the U-M Health System*

What has happened to MNA/NNU?

Simply put: MNA forgot it's the members who should be the voice of the organization. We attempted to work with leaders to develop a true democratic structure that allowed members to have a greater voice in the decisions within MNA. Our experience at the university is a clear demonstration that when nurses are valued and listened to, we can be stronger and move forward in solidarity. Let's not be swayed by MNA's recent appearances and remember that it was a ghost prior to our decision to disaffiliate. Soon, nurses at UMPNC will have the same opportunity to exercise their right to vote No to MNA that nurses at Mercy Health Hackley in Muskegon had when they chose a different union in 2020.

Why is the affiliation with NNU so problematic?

In its own documents just a few short years ago, MNA stated that “the benefits envisioned by the affiliation (NNU) never materialized—not in Michigan, at least.” MNA went on to say that “any support that was provided to Michigan was dwarfed by the outflow of money from Michigan to NNU.” **Does affiliation sound like a good idea to you? It doesn't to us.** Especially not when 60 percent of the funds that go to California come from the dues paid by UMPNC members. Why weren't we consulted about this? Shame on the MNA board of directors for ignoring the voice of its constituents. We have stood strong for UMPNC, and we are honored to be standing with all of you at this time. It's our organization. Let's solidify that through a vote for UMPNC.

VOTE YES for an INDEPENDENT UMPNC!

We want to keep UMPNC strong; to do that, we are continuing to collect membership applications.

Please encourage your fellow nurses to sign here:

<https://app.hellosign.com/s/GfNug0t5>

