

# Los Angeles Times

On The Internet: WWW.LATIMES.COM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2007

## UCI Medical Center has fired 13 nurses Union says the hospital is investigating an activist who sought information on one of the firings. Facility officials won't comment.

By Jennifer Delson, LA Times Staff Writer

UCI Medical Center has fired 13 nurses in the last three months and is investigating a union activist who sought information about one of the dismissals, according to the nurses union.

Eight of the nurses have more than 20 years of experience each, and four of those have spent their two decades at UCI, union officials said. Hospital officials would not comment on why the nurses were let go.

Susan Mancia, a hospital spokeswoman, said UCI was ranked among the top five hospitals in Southern California in a survey for Nurses magazine, in which nurses graded the quality of care, organizational culture, development, communications and retention efforts.

The hospital, which is in Orange, also has received a designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, which demonstrates a hospital's ability to attract and retain highly trained nurses.

UCI has had a series of scandals in its medical programs, ranging from doctors in its fertility clinic stealing eggs and embryos from patients, bodies missing from the medical school's cadaver program and failings in the hospital's bone marrow, liver and kidney transplant programs.

Most recently, 22 medical center employees were disciplined for having falsified certificates showing that they had passed cardiopulmonary resuscitation training. Hospital officials would not say if nurses were involved.

Beth Kean, the California Nurse Assn. director for University of California hospitals, said a "witch hunt"

environment exists at the medical center.

"Management is encouraging nurses to report on each other," she said. "It's an unhealthy climate. If they want to clean house, they ought to be targeting their management offices, not the bedside."

The most recent dismissal was of a nurse who worked in the newborn nursery for 27 years, said Beth Kean, the California Nurse Assn. director for University of California hospitals.

She was fired Oct. 23, shortly after determining that vaccinations in the baby area were adult dosages. She worked with the hospital pharmacy to dilute the medicine and administered it to a baby, Kean said.

The nurse was fired because she wrote too much information about the incident in the patient chart, Kean said. The nurse has filed a grievance to try to get her job back, Kean said.

"You don't take away someone's livelihood for a minor infraction," said Catherine Montgomery, a nurse in the psychiatry department, where two nurses were fired.

Nurse Lilliam Triana said that when she asked questions about the most recent firing, she was suspended with pay for a day last week. She returned to work Monday, but an investigation is continuing, union officials said.

"I love my job, and I missed not being there," Triana said. "This is my profession and my love. But I feel like I'm under a huge microscope. A lot of us have felt like that for quite some time. I feel very tense and nervous, but I have done nothing wrong."

For more information, contact your CNA rep or labor rep, or email CNA at [ucdivision@calnurses.org](mailto:ucdivision@calnurses.org)



**A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Healthcare.**