



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **South Los Angeles' Largest Health Center To Provide \$15 Living Wage to Frontline Healthcare Workers Through New Labor Agreement**

**LOS ANGELES** – St. John's Well Child and Family Center, a non-profit network of community health centers, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 721 have reached a groundbreaking collective bargaining agreement that provides a living wage of \$15 an hour to front-line healthcare workers providing care in some of South Los Angeles' poorest communities. Workers, management, elected officials and labor leaders provided details of the agreement at a news conference on March 13 at St. John's S. Mark Taper Foundation Health Center, 808 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street.

"We put forward the proposal for a living wage because we want our health centers to be the best places to give and to receive care," said St. John's President and CEO Jim Mangia. "St. John's is ready to provide quality care to the tens of thousands of newly-insured patients under the Affordable Care Act because of the dedication of our front line workforce. Together, we're caring for downtown, South Los Angeles and Compton."

"The contract between St. John's and SEIU 721 members sends a very simple and powerful message. It's important to pay all working Americans wages that allow them to get ahead, not just get by," said Fabrizzio Perez, a patient navigator at St. John's Health S. Mark Taper Foundation Health Center. Perez, who was raised in South Los Angeles and has worked at St. John's for 1 1/2 years, is a member of SEIU 721. Union members voted unanimously to ratify the new three year agreement on March 3.

"This commitment to provide a living wage proves that when employers and employees work together, the community is lifted," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. "St. John's is an employer that is leading by example – it's possible to deliver quality healthcare and provide quality jobs. Economic health is tied to physical and mental well being. This wage ensures that the workers who provide care to people that are ill, can provide that care with dignity." Ridley-Thomas represents the district where many of St. John's health centers are located.

The agreement to provide a living wage comes as the Los Angeles City Council considers steps that would require big hotels to pay workers a living wage of \$15.37 an hour.

"Income inequality is a persistent issue plaguing our country, our city and especially our underserved South Los Angeles community," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Curren Price. "I applaud St. John's Well Child and Family Center for taking this huge step forward, and practicing what they preach. This effort is consistent with the progressive legislation that we at the city level are looking to implement and I hope that it serves as an incentive for more businesses to follow suit."

"The agreement between St. John's and SEIU 721 is a ray of hope for Los Angeles, one of the leading low-wage capitals of our nation," said Maria Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles Federation of Labor. "This commitment to provide a \$15 an hour living wage that will affect hundreds of families shows that when employers and employees work together, we can lift up our communities. St. John's is an employer that is leading by example – it's possible to deliver quality healthcare and provide quality jobs."