



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

LOCAL 1168, AFL-CIO



DATE: July 7, 2010

TO: All CWA Local 1168 Members at Kaleida Health

FROM: President John Klein and CWA Local 1168 Executive Board

RE: Message from Jim Kaskie RE: Clinics dated June 25, 2010

Commitment – Open – Honest – Communication (aka. CREATIVE WRITING)

CWA Local 1168 and Members throughout the system take exception to Mr. Kaskie's "Kaleida Everyone communication from June 25, 2010. There needs to be some clarifying statements that accompany his remark, *"Continuing my commitment to you for open and honest communication..."*

Make no mistake...between the upcoming federal health care reform requirements and the continued New York State Budget crisis, each and every one of us faces new economic challenges on a daily basis. But some of the *"change"* that Mr. Kaskie alludes to has been in the works for quite awhile. Kaleida Health continues to diminish the outpatient services that have been a pillar of support for primary healthcare access in the surrounding communities; just as it has done over the past several years.

The **CLOSING**, not the "moving" of the **Wettlaufer Eye Clinic** (closing August 30, 2010) is one of several recent examples of Kaleida eliminating "outpatient services". The employer presented **closing** the clinic to both the Union and staff at job security. Moving the clinic would insinuate the staff could move with their work to another location; let's clarify with *"open and honest communication"*- what it means is job deletion and layoffs (will get back to this topic as well). Outpatient Rehabilitation (PT and OT) has been eliminated at BGH and PAT and the wound clinic have closed at Gates Circle. Until this communication from Mr. Kaskie, the Employer continued to deny the closing of the Dental/ Oral Surgery Program at BGH. The Union has repeatedly inquired over rumors filtering down from Medical Staff that they would be indeed next to close. Yet the author of Mr. Kaskie's letter to all of us states, it's *"under review."* On July 2, 2010 Kaleida sent an apology email for not being able to schedule a meeting, but are indeed moving forward with **closing** the dental clinic and oral surgery department in October.

To further add insult to this premise of open, honest communication is that your UNION is working with Kaleida regarding these issues –

"Many ideas about where the organization could trim costs are being shared and discussed within the organization as well as with leaders of the three unions that represent Kaleida employees..."

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The fact is the Union made a request to see the hard numbers that accompany the financial cuts faced by the health system, to be part of evaluating workloads, department analysis and decipher where the corporation is hemorrhaging financially; but we have been denied. An argument was made to the Employer that the Union played a pivotal role in keeping the Flint Road Labs from closing, when the employer wanted to sell it off. The labs are now financially secure, yet still we are met with denial.

To address Mr. Kaskie's statements as follows:

"These efforts have included the implementation of wage freezes or reductions, increased employee contributions for insurance benefits and furloughing or laying off employees."

And

"Carrying out a comprehensive review of all costs – from contracts and purchases to employee compensation and benefits."

This Local has made it perfectly clear that we are willing to look at a variety of solutions to the fiscal crisis, but there will be no discussions prior to bargaining in 2011 with regards to compensation packages (wages, insurance benefits, etc....), which are currently protected by the collective bargaining agreement. Further, to reference the Unions as part of this discussion is misleading. NO, there is NO longer effective communication between Kaleida Leadership and the UNIONS. However there continues to be a growing level of distrust.

Why distrust? First of all trust is based on mutual respect. Trust is based on the premise that the collective bargaining agreement will be followed, not violated. Contract violations are at an all time high, with managers reciting phrases like "*grieve it!*" Is that mutual respect? Furthermore, Mr. Kaskie's communication is morally unconscionable and less than truthful about the leadership's level of communication with the employees and their union representation. Is that effective communication?

Finally, with CWA's commitment to open honest communication, the Employer expressed the notion that they should have the right to place people into jobs at their discretion and not follow contract language. How dare this Union Leadership with the backing of 4,000 + Members in Kaleida, expect the Employer to follow the seniority, layoff and bumping language in the contract, "*when they have invested so much into new hires!*" During this time of distinct uncertainty, the Employer wants to circumvent the layoff language that protects the rights of our members. Kaleida's *Employee Satisfaction - Press Ganey Survey* indicated Members are feeling undervalued and distrusting of the Employer.

Mr. Kaskie defined the meaning of "*core services*" in his communication to Kaleida Everyone. CWA Local 1168's interpretation of Kaleida Health's "*Core Service*" definition is –

- If it is not a money maker...get rid of it!
- If it is losing money...get rid of it!
- If it serves the inner-city...get rid of it!

In other words...
if it's accessible primary care to the poor inner city
community... get rid of it!