

# **National Union of Healthcare Workers: Wisconsin mental health workers seeking improved patient care and more reasonable workloads for caregivers illegally fired**

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**Major Wisconsin mental health provider, Rogers Behavioral Health, retaliates against three West Allis caregivers who informed management that they and their co-workers were forming union**

**National Union of Healthcare Workers files charges with the National Labor Relations Board, calls for the dismissed workers to be reinstated**

***“Rogers is the poster child for illegal retaliation against workers in its home state.”***

**West Allis, Wisc.** —Three mental health professionals employed at Wisconsin-based Rogers Behavioral Health were illegally fired this week after they notified management in person that they and their coworkers were forming a union.

Rogers is one of the country's largest providers of mental health and addiction treatment services. The nonprofit corporation, based in Oconomowoc, has voluntarily recognized the right of its employees at three Rogers' clinics in California and one in Pennsylvania to be represented by the union that represents thousands of mental health workers, The National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW).

However, in its home state, Rogers has chosen to hire unionbusters to intimidate

nurses, behavioral health technicians and mental health therapists in advance of union elections soon to be scheduled by the National Labor Relations Board at clinics in both West Allis and Madison. As part of that intimidation effort, Rogers illegally fired three of its best employees at the West Allis clinic on February 9 in clear violation of federal labor law.

“This is an outrageous and illegal act of retaliation that will leave patients with even fewer direct caregivers,” said Stephani Lohman, a nurse practitioner, who is one of the fired workers. “Our goal in forming a union has been to improve care and reverse changes that have made it harder for patients to get the services they need.”

NUHW, which represents more private sector mental health workers than any other union in the country, has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board against Rogers over the firings, demanding that workers get their jobs back. NUHW also is alerting unions across Wisconsin, in both the public and private sector, about the firings and raising the question whether their members should be getting treatment from a company that retaliates against its workers.

The choice to form a union by 36 mental health professionals at Rogers Madison Behavioral Health Treatment Center and 63 at the West Allis Outpatient Treatment Center comes on the heels of Rogers workers at its three California behavioral health centers joining NUHW without any retaliation from Rogers and negotiating contracts that included raises, limits on caseloads, and guarantees that no jobs would be lost to new technologies, including artificial intelligence. In December, workers at [Rogers Philadelphia also joined NUHW](#) without any opposition from Rogers and are now negotiating a first contract.

“Our members at Rogers have been on the leading edge when it comes to improving mental health services, but I’ve never seen such an about-face from an employer,” said NUHW President Emeritus Sal Rosselli. “Rogers was on its way to becoming a much better place to give and receive care, and now Rogers is the poster child for illegal retaliation against workers in its home state.”

The staff at Rogers West Allis clinic began organizing a union late last year several months after the company reclassified its mental health clinicians from salaried to hourly workers. The shift led to many workers being called off their shifts when the patient census dipped, resulting in higher patient volumes for the remaining staff members and less available care for patients. Rogers also lifted caps on caseloads,

forcing caregivers to be responsible for far more patients than previously.