

THE PULSE

<https://uswlocals.org/local-9460>

voice of United Steelworkers Local 9460, the Northland's healthcare workers' union

HEALTHCARE WORKERS UNDER ATTACK BY THE VIRUS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS!



The current resurgence of COVID19 has overwhelmed important parts of the healthcare system. The images are well known: patients parked on gurneys in hallways, exhausted nurses staggering from shift to shift, and shortages of crucial equipment such as respirators.

A few statistics show the severity of the situation. At least 213 RNs have died from COVID. A staggering 258, 768 have been infected by the disease. In this situation, the 86% of nurses who reported suffering from anxiety in a Mental Health America survey have sound reasons for feel-

ing that way. Another 1,200 non-nurse health care workers have died.

The crisis in healthcare has led to an increase in strikes and union activity by nurses and other healthcare workers.

There have been a number of different forms the fight back is taking.

-Strikes. (Albany Medical Center, Montefiore New Rochelle, Multi-Care Indigo Urgent Care, East Liverpool City Hospital in Ohio, and St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, PA.) [cont. on pg. 3]

Mounting Mental Health Crisis Among Healthcare Workers

With coronavirus infections and deaths rising to astronomical heights over the past two months, frontline health care workers are increasingly experiencing acute mental and emotional distress.

Research studies have shed light on the dangerous mental health toll that is being exacted on health care workers, who are facing extreme physical demands as a result of the growth of the pandemic. In a new study by Mental Health America, healthcare workers were found to exhibit elevated levels of anxiety, stress and emotional exhaustion. The study was carried out in November, which saw the initial resurgence of the pandemic, overwhelming hospitals. [cont. on pg. 3]

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the PULSE

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UNION OFFICERS:

- Deanna Hughes, *President*
- Adam Ritscher, *Vice President*
- Jackie Liebel, *Recording Secretary*
- Tracy Osterhues, *Financial Secretary*
- Brenda Simon, *Treasurer*
- Lynn Wedlund, *Guide*
- Kelli Ritz, *Inner Guard*
- Cheryl Virta, *Outer Guard*
- Laura Vu, *Trustee*
- Julie Packingham, *Trustee*
- Melissa Johnson, *Trustee*

UNIT PRESIDENTS:

- Brenda Simon, *EH Green Book*
- Kathy Wauzynski, *EH Hibbing*
- Lynn Wedlund, *EH Ashland*
- Laura Erickson, *EH Ely/Babbitt*
- Charity Hoag, *EH Spooner*
- Cole Schorr, *Ecumen Lakeshore*
- Jay Gault, *Pine Medical Center*
- Deanna Hughes, *EH Hayward*
- Tuan Vu, *EH Red Book*
- Angie Amrein, *Chequamegon Clinic*
- Scott Guenard, *St. Luke's Tech Unit*
- Lindajean Thompson, *former SMUMS*
- Deanna Hughes, *Itasca Hospice*
- Brenda Robinson, *LSCHC Support*
- Lane O'Connell, *LSCHC Prof. Unit*
- Deanna Hughes, *Midwest Medical*

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

UNION STEWARDS

Stewards are trained volunteers located in each workplace that help make sure that our employers honor their contracts with us, and treat our members fairly. Here is a current list of our stewards. Feel free to reach out to them if you have any workplace issues.

CHEQUAMEGON CLINIC: Angie Amrein, Alyssa Groom, Elizabeth Zwetow

ECUMEN LAKESHORE: Cole Schorr

ESSENTIA ASHLAND: Katie DeWitt, Lynne Johnson, Lori Skaj, Lynn Wedlund

ESSENTIA BLUE BOOK: Kim Morton, Sven Johnson

ESSENTIA ELY/BABBITT: Laura Erickson

ESSENTIA GREEN BOOK: Cindy Anstett, Roxane Boutin, Mary Beth Ellis, Joni Hetrick, Jackie Liebel, Stephen Mapstone, Sheri Mattson, Melodee Meyers, Micki Olson, Christine Ojanen, Renee Rautell, Marine Schaffer, Brenda Simon, Jennie Shovein, Tim Spawn, Cheryl Virta, Tim Visina, Laura Vu, Janice Welsand, Darla Woodall, Matt Alan Van Holbeck, Trina Eastman

ESSENTIA HAYWARD: Tera Parker

ESSENTIA HIBBING: Shelly Brownlee, Audry Chamberlin, Kelli Ritz, Kathy Wauzynski

ESSENTIA RED BOOK: Aaron Allen, Sirina Berntson, Ashley Goble, Greg Gowan, Jennifer Horst, Ryan Reuter, Celeste Sinks, Zac Tuominen, Teresa Vigliaturo, Tuan Vu, Cassandra Flynn, Lori Kulas, Adria Molberg

ESSENTIA SPOONER: Amy Johnson, Tracy Osterhues, Charity Hoag

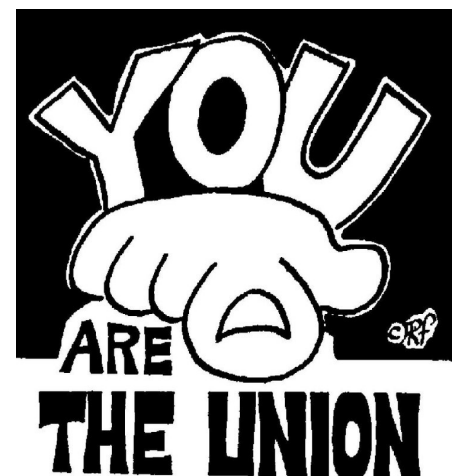
LSCHC PROFESSIONAL UNIT: Lane O'Connell, JoEllyn Steele, Kaitlin Thompson, Penny Waldum

LSCHC SUPPORT STAFF: Niki Colard, Shelly DeGraef, Brenda Robinson

MIDWEST MEDICAL: Misty Degeler, Melissa Johnson, Steve Plasa, Sue Wagner-Thomas

PINE MEDICAL CENTER: Jay Gault

ST. LUKE'S TECHNICAL: Kathy Campbell, Jack Foster, Scott Guenard, Mark Lund, Tiffany Shaw



Do you have questions about your pension? Contact:

Steelworker Pensions & Benefits

60 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
1 (800) 848-1953 phone; (412) 562-2275 fax

HEALTHCARE WORKERS UNDER ATTACK BY VIRUS & EMPLOYERS (cont.)

-Strike authorization votes. (Riverside Community Hospital in Los Robles, CA, and SEIU Local 73 at Cook County Health in Chicago.)

-Campaigns against hospital closure. (Closing Mercy Hospital and reducing services at Provident in Chicago.)

-Informational Pickets, Car Caravans & Other Protests (MNA at Essentia and St. Luke's, USW Local 9460 at Essentia Health in Duluth and Spooner)

During a crisis, like a pandemic, where healthcare workers are putting their life on the line, they shouldn't have to worry about whether their jobs are safe, or if their employer is going to use the pandemic as an excuse to cut benefits or our contractual rights. But shamefully that is an all too common occurrence across the country. Excuse after excuse if made for increasing our workloads, cutting staff and not providing enough PPE.

Wherever healthcare workers have had to fight back, they've received a lot of support from both the people in the community, and from other unions. That has been one positive thing that has come out of all of this. Healthcare workers face a very complicated situation today. However, one thing that's not complicated is the tasks before us when we see healthcare workers who need solidarity. Let's all commit to doing everything we can to stand in solidarity with one another during these tough times!

>> *The article above was written by Adam Shills.*



Healthcare Mental Health (cont.)

According to the MHA survey, 93 percent of health care workers were experiencing stress, while around 86 percent reported anxiety produced by the sudden overflow of sick patients. Some 77 percent reported feeling frustrated with their working conditions, and a similar percentage experienced physical exhaustion and burnout. Paralleling the extreme strain on hospitals all across the country, 75 percent of workers said they were overwhelmed.

The survey revealed widespread worry about contracting and spreading the deadly virus. Among health care workers, 76 percent reported that they were worried about exposing their children to COVID-19, and nearly half were worried about exposing their spouse or partner. Another 47 percent were concerned about exposing their older adult relatives.

Many health care workers said the pandemic left them feeling emotionally isolated and alienated in their workplaces, as well as having to cope with severe consequences in their home life.

A significant 38 percent of health care workers said they did not feel that they had adequate emotional support. Among nurses, the number was 45 percent. Among workers with children, half reported that they were lacking quality time with their children or were unable to be a consistently present parent.

In the introduction to the survey, MHA wrote that workplace conditions are "getting worse by the day and health care workers aren't getting a reprieve." Health care workers are feeling "frustrated, anxious... and worried about exposing their loved ones." Given the extraordinary amount of stress placed [cont. on page 4]

Healthcare Mental Health (cont.)

on health care workers, many are at risk of developing even more severe mental health conditions such as depression and even thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

This phenomenon is mirrored in the general population, with alarming increases in reports of depression and anxiety nationwide. Psychological screenings showed a 634 percent jump in anxiety for the nation from January, and depression soared 873 percent.

For health care workers the deterioration of mental wellness due to the pandemic has been accompanied by greater risks. Countless research studies have shown that physicians were at increased risk of suicide. While research has not revealed a causal link between worsening conditions due to the pandemic and cases of suicide, there is a high correlation between health care workers' suicide risk and an exacerbation of job-related stressors from the virus.

According to the Psychology Health Center of Excellence, a clinical resource center, these job-related stressors include significant workload changes as a result of the growth of the pandemic, and the inability of hospitals to manage rapidly increasing nurse-to-patient ratios.

Many health care workers have also found it extremely difficult to obtain and maintain effective personal protective equipment. Amid the massive scale of death from the pandemic, now close to 360,000, many health care workers have also been traumatized by their experiences in intensive care wards, often witnessing scores of patients falling victim to the virus with little ability to save them.

Because of the influx of COVID-19 patients and the dilapidated state of health care infrastructure, workers have been forced to confront the terrifying issue of rationing care

Adding to the mental health crisis has been the staggering increase in positive tests for health care workers. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been at least 287,000 COVID-19 infections among health care workers in the US.

Medical facilities nationwide are being inundated with COVID-19 patients, countless ICU wards have filled beyond capacity, and states have been forced to build impromptu and makeshift facilities to deal with the extreme demand. Moreover, staffing shortages and burnout conditions are leading to severe strains on what was an already devastated health care infrastructure and severely overworked staff.

>> written by Alex Johnson

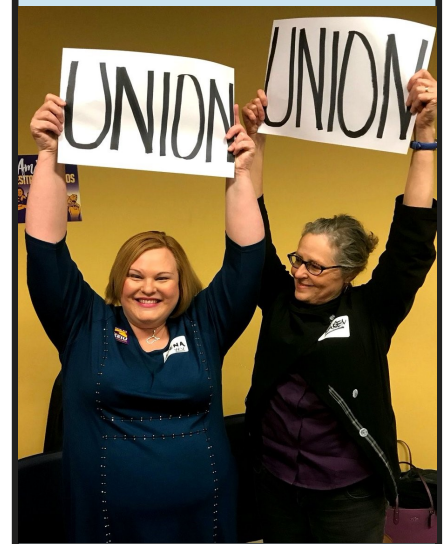


GET INVOLVED IN YOUR UNION!

Your union is what you make it. So be sure to attend your monthly membership meetings and make your voice heard.

Labor Temple, Rm 202
USW Local 9460 Office,
2002 London Road
Duluth MN 55812

Because of the pandemic we have had to temporarily suspend our monthly membership meetings. Our Executive Board has continued to meet though. And there are still ways to stay tuned in and active with your union. You're find a variety of ways to do so through this newsletter.



LOCAL UNION ELECTIONS COMING SOON. . .

This April will be when we elect our local union officers. All of our offices — from President to Trustee - will be up for election. In March we will be nominating candidates (stay tuned for how we're going to set that up with the pandemic) that will then be placed on the ballots used for the April election. If you've always wanted to run for union office, now is the time!



PLUG INTO OUR COMMITTEES!

Our Local union has been working hard at re-organizing and breathing life into our committees. Committees are great way to get involved in issues that are important to you! Here is a current list of committees that we have. If you're interested in being a part of any of them, or in finding out more info about what they do, let us know!

Veterans of Steel: A resource for USW members who served or who are serving our country to find camaraderie, support and a way to fight for core issues such as a fully-funded Veterans Administration or jobs for vets. Email dhughes.usw@gmail.com

Workers' Aid: Works on community and labor solidarity projects, as well as organizing non-union workers. Email adamritscher@gmail.com

Health & Safety: Works to ensure safe working condi-

tions for all of our member. For more information you can contact Tim Visna at (218) 269-1237 or Deanna at dhughes.usw@gmail.com

Civil & Human Rights: Works to ensure diversity, and fight discrimination. Contact Laura Vu at (218) 310-0494.

Women of Steel: Encourages women to play a leadership role in the movement. For more info contact Kelli Ritz at (218) 969-7317

Legislative/Rapid Response: Works on healthcare related bills and lobbying elected officials. For more info email tuanvu.usw@gmail.com

Local 9460 is on Facebook!



facebook.com/local9460

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS:

This past year we negotiated new contracts at St. Luke's, and had wage reopeners at Pine Medical Center and the Essentia Green Book.

Currently we have ongoing negotiations at the Chequamegon Clinic, Essentia Red Book, Grand Rapids Itasca and Pine Medical Center. We have reached tentative agreements for Chequamegon Clinic and Grand Rapids, and the members there will be voting soon.

We are just about to start negotiations for the Professional and Support Staff contacts at the Lake Community Health Center. Ecumen opens this Spring. And this summer we'll be starting negotiations for the Essentia Green Book. And the Essentia Regional Clinics will have a wage re-opener for the 3rd year of their contract this summer.

Stay tuned for surveys, meeting announcements and updates in your mail, throughout the year. And if you're interested in serving on your unit's Negotiating Committee, let your Unit President know, since they select the committee. See page 2 for a list of current unit presidents.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEGOTIATING TEAM FOR WAYS TO HELP

NO LAYOFFS!

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge for all healthcare providers. But one of our employers, Essentia Health, opted to use the pandemic as a thinly veiled excuse to downsize their workforce. Despite receiving tens of millions of dollars in government assistance, and the dramatic increase in work needing to be done, Essentia laid off hundreds of our members. But Local 9460 didn't take this laying down. We fought back. What follows are some photos from our 2020 Fight Back campaign.



All of the photos on this page are of the No Layoffs caravan protest we held this summer at the downtown Duluth campus of Essentia Health. Folks from across the region formed a car caravan that wove its way through the campus holding signs and honking. Teams of our members stood on street corners, picketing and informing the public about what was going on. We were also joined by Steelworkers from across the region, and other unions like the MNA, SEIU and UFCW.



FIGHT BACK!



We held informational pickets at other sites, like Spooner. We distributed several hundred yard signs throughout the region. But what seemed to get attention more than anything else, were the multiple billboards we put up in the Twin Ports and across northern Wisconsin and Minnesota with the message “Essentia Health—Putting Wealth Over Health Like Nowhere Else.” Both the union and the billboard company got legal threats from Essentia, but refused to back down and the billboards stayed up until the layoffs stopped.



LOCAL 9460'S COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS!



Currently we are offering four \$500 scholarships for students who will be attending school at a technical or community college, four \$500 scholarships for students who will be attending a university or four year college on a part time basis, and seven \$1000 scholarships for students who will be attending a university on a full time basis. All of these scholarships are just for one year, but students are welcome to apply every year, even if they have won in previous years. A drawing is done from the applications we get. We are very excited to offer this benefit to our members!

Below are the instructions and applications for our local union scholarships:

1. TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

Local 9460 will be awarding four \$500 Scholarships, to a student attending a Technical College or Community College. Scholarships will be awarded sec-

ond semester of schooling, as long as student has a 2.5 GPA end of first semester. Students must provide the Local 9460 Financial Secretary with a TRANSCRIPT for fall of 2021 (unofficial transcripts will be accepted, but it MUST be the transcript), and proof of second semester enrollment for Spring 2022. All checks will be made out to and mailed to the college, not the student. Student must provide name of school and address of the financial office of which the check needs to be mailed, along with a copy of their student ID. These scholarships are for one year only. Students who are awarded a scholarship this year may apply following years, that the scholarship is offered, as long as all criteria are met.

WHO MAY APPLY: Incoming and current Technical Students/Community College who are enrolled in a program. Must be a Son, Daughter, Stepson, Stepdaughter, or Legal Ward of an, in good standing, dues paying, member of Local 9460.

2. UNIVERITY/PART-TIME: Local 9460 will be awarding four \$500 Scholarships, to be awarded to a student attending an undergraduate OR graduate program at a university, part-time. Scholarships will be awarded second semester of schooling, as long as student has a 2.5 GPA end of the first semester. Student must provide Local 9460 Financial Secretary with a TRANSCRIPT for fall of 2021 (unofficial transcripts will be accepted, but it MUST be the transcript), and proof of second semester enrollment for Spring 2022. All checks will be made out to and mailed to the college, not the student. Student must provide name of school and address of the financial office of which the check needs to be mailed, along with a copy of their student ID. These scholarships are for one year only. Students who are awarded a scholarship this year may apply following years, that the scholarship is offered, as long as all criteria are met.

WHO MAY APPLY: Incoming and current **part time** College Undergraduates and Graduates who are enrolled in a university. Must be a Son, Daughter, Stepson, Stepdaughter, or Legal Ward of an, in good standing, dues paying, member of Local 9460.

3. UNIVERSITY/FULL-TIME: Local 9460 will be awarding seven \$1,000 Scholarships, to be awarded to a student attending an undergraduate OR graduate program at a university, full-time. Scholarship will be awarded second semester of schooling, as long as student has a 2.5 GPA end of the first semester. Student must provide Local 9460 Financial Secretary with a TRANSCRIPT for fall of 2021 (unofficial transcripts will be accepted, but it **MUST** be the transcript), and proof of second semester enrollment for Spring 2022. All checks will be made out to and mailed to the college, not the student. Student must provide name of school and address of the financial office of which the check needs to be mailed, along with a copy of their student ID. These scholarships are for one year only. Students who are awarded a scholarship this year may apply following years, that the scholarship is offered, as long as all criteria are met.

WHO MAY APPLY: Incoming and current **full time** College Undergraduates and Graduates who are enrolled in a University. Must be a Son, Daughter, Stepson, Stepdaughter, or Legal ward of an, in good standing, dues paying, member of Local 9460.

HOW TO APPLY: Submit this application with a letter explaining your program of study and why you are entering that field of study, along with the name of the school and your enrollment status (full or part time).

Deadline for application is: April 15th, 2021

Selections will be made by drawing at the Local Meeting on Tuesday, April 19th, 2021

Mail application and letter to:

Tracy Osterhues, Financial Secretary
USW Local 9460, 2002 London Rd #202, Duluth MN 55812

Please do not leave any items blank:

Student Name (Last, Middle Initial, First): _____

Permanent Home Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Name of & Relationship to Union Member: _____

Phone Number: _____

*"The most important word in the language of the working class is **SOLIDARITY!**" ~Harry Bridges*

UNION OFFICERS & WHAT THEY DO

With the election of our union officers coming up this April (watch your mail for nominations and election notices), we thought it would be useful to list all of the elected union offices we have, and what their role and duties are. The language below is taken from the United Steelworkers Constitution. These officers make up our local union's Executive Board.

Duties of President: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Local Union and preserve order, and shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Local Union. The President shall have the right to vote at all elections of officers, and, when the members are equally divided on other questions, shall have the deciding vote. The President shall call special meetings by request of ten (10) members in good standing of the Local Union and shall enforce the provisions of this Constitution. The President shall appoint all committees not otherwise provided for and be ex-officio member of all committees. The President shall perform such other duties as the Local Union may assign.

In the event that a vacancy occurs in the office of Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Guide, Guard or Trustee or in the position of Grievance Committee Member at any time during the term of office, the remaining Local Union Officers shall, by majority vote, select a successor to serve for the remainder of that term.

* * * * *

Duties of Vice President: The Vice President shall assist the President in the discharge of the President's duties and during the President's absence shall perform the duties of the President. In the event that a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall act as President for the unexpired term.

* * * * *

Duties of Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary shall record the proceedings of the Local Union in a book kept for that purpose, read all papers, and perform such other duties required under this Constitution and as the Local Union may assign. The Recording Secretary shall also have custody of the Local Union Seal and shall be responsible for any misuse of same.

* * * * *

Duties of Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary shall receive all money due the Local Union and pay the Same to the Treasurer, from whom the Financial Secretary shall take a receipt. The Financial Secretary shall also keep accurately the accounts of the Local Union with its members and shall at all times have the books open for examination by the Auditing Committee, and perform such other duties required under the Constitution and as the Local Union may assign. The Financial Secretary shall make out the various reports required by the International Secretary-Treasurer and forward such reports to the International Secretary-Treasurer in accordance with instructions.

Should it be proved that a Local Union Financial Secretary has failed to report monthly the full membership of the Local Union as provided for in the report to the International Secretary-Treasurer and transmit the full amount of initiation fees and dues, the Financial Secretary shall be suspended from all privileges and benefits until the deficiency is made good, and shall be liable to the International Union for the full amount unpaid.

The Financial Secretary shall keep a record of all 3 transfer request forms issued and received. The Financial

Secretary's accounts shall be subject at all times to audit by the International Secretary-Treasurer.

* * * * *

Duties of Treasurer: The Treasurer shall receive from the Financial Secretary all money collected by the Financial Secretary and shall deposit all money belonging to the Local Union in a bank designated by it. All initiation fees and dues shall be deposited in a separate bank account to be designated as a trust fund for the International Union. The Treasurer shall cause to be issued to the Financial Secretary a receipt for all money turned over to the Treasurer or deposited to the Treasurer's credit in the regular bank account. The Treasurer shall issue a separate receipt for the amount of money turned over at any time or for such deposit made, and shall sign all checks and have them countersigned by the President and the Financial Secretary. At the option of the Local, a Vice President, who is designated in advance, can serve as an alternative signatory.

The Treasurer shall keep regular and correct accounts of all money received and paid, and report at each meeting the balance of cash shown by the last report, the amount received since, the total checks issued and authorized, and the balance remaining. The Treasurer's accounts shall be open for examination by the Auditing Committee at any time when called upon. The Treasurer's books shall be subject at all times to audit by the International Secretary-Treasurer of the United Steelworkers. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties required under the Constitution and as the Local Union may assign.

* * * * *

Duties of Guide: It shall be the duty of the Guide to see that all present are entitled to remain.

* * * * *

Duties of Guards: It shall be the duty of the Guards to take charge of the door and see that no one enters who is not entitled to do so.

* * * * *

Duties of Trustees: It shall be the duty of the Trustees to have charge of the hall and all property of the Local Union, subject to the direction of the Local Union, and perform such other duties as the Local Union may require.

* * * * *

Duties of Unit Positions:

Unit President: It shall be the duty of the Unit President to preside at all meetings of the Unit; to decide all questions of order, subject to appeal to the Local Union; and, consistent with the provisions of these By-Laws and the Manuals, policies and Constitution of the International Union, to perform such other duties as the Unit or the Local Union may assign. The Unit President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees in his/her Unit, and shall appoint all committees within the Unit not otherwise provided for.

- (b) **Unit Secretary:** It shall be the duty of the Unit Secretary to record the attendance and the proceedings of the Unit in books kept for that purpose, to read all papers and to perform such other duties, consistent with these By-Laws and the Manuals, policies and Constitution of the International Union, as the Unit or the Local Union may assign.
- (c) **Unit Griever:** It shall be the duty of the Unit Griever to process complaints and grievances, within their respective Units and in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement and consistent with these By-Laws and the Manuals, policies and Constitution of the International Union, as the Unit or the Local Union may assign.



United Steelworkers Local 9460

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WORKING CLASS HERO: **A. Philip Randolph**

A. Philip Randolph brought the gospel of trade unionism to millions of African American households. Randolph led a 10-year drive to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) and served as the organization's first president. Randolph directed the March on Washington movement to end employment discrimination in the defense industry and a national civil disobedience campaign to ban segregation in the armed forces. The nonviolent protest and mass action effort inspired the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Retiring as president of the BSCP in 1968, Randolph was named the president of the recently formed A. Philip Randolph Institute, established to promote trade unionism in the black community. He continued to serve on the AFL-CIO Executive Council until 1974. He died in New York City on May 16, 1979.

