

10/10/25

An Open Letter to the Washington State Nurses Association and Seattle Children's Hospital Nurses

My warmest greetings to you all.

I am a lifelong admirer and supporter of you and your profession. As a pediatrician I cherish how much I learned from you in pediatric residency training years, how much I appreciate our thought-partnership and teamwork together throughout my clinical career, and how your profession has long represented the best components of patient care and advocacy in the healthcare fields.

I have been especially guided by your moral grounding, which is deeply woven into your dedication to helping others. In particular, your stalwart championing of DEI and anti-racism has stood as healthcare's beacon. In this, and so many other ways, you are the conscience of caring. Which is why I am so disheartened by Seattle Children's Hospital's decisions to erase DEI and anti-racism language from their contract language with you, as well as from their website content.

This may well be one of the most important times in our history for our values around DEI and anti-racism to be assertively expressed. Values like these are most meaningful when they are challenged. Whereas it's easy to talk about these things when they provide nice soundbites. Their rapid retraction today by Seattle Children's Hospital confirms to me that their efforts in this area have always been half-hearted; have always been less than sincere.

The quick abandonment of DEI and anti-racism by Seattle Children's Hospital is extremely concerning, given the hospital's history of racist treatment of Black, and other BIPOC identifying patients and staff. Many other groups have also faced biased treatment at this hospital. Unacceptable treatment which continues to haunt this institution today.

To you wonderful and valued nursing professionals, I want you to know that I stand in solidarity with you. I stand with you in your efforts to keep anti-racism and DEI at the center of your work and at the top of the contract with Seattle Children's Hospital. I am appalled that the hospital is demonstrating in this manner that it does not care about BIPOC people. I am appalled but not surprised. I am further appalled that the hospital is bringing in union-

busting attorneys to the contract discussions. Seattle Children's Hospital is trying to take away your voices as nursing professionals. They are trying to keep you from having your right to sue in a court of law when they break the law and violate your rights. They want you to give up protections that have been in your contract for decades.

I remember a time at Seattle Children's Hospital when union nurses and management used to work well together. Therefore, I know it's possible. And yet I watch today as the hospital rejects important values around DEI and anti-racism and aggressively tries to undermine your union. I urge you to stand strong. I know from personal experience that even powerful institutions like this can be overcome; if you stick to your values and you stand, arms locked, together.

Sincerely and in Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Danielson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Benjamin Danielson MD