



## Pact averts strikes at 3 nursing homes

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About 80 nursing home caregivers in Union City and 220 more across the state avoided going on strike when Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) reached a last-minute agreement with management yesterday.

Three nursing homes would have been affected by the strike - Manhattan View Nursing Home in Union City, Teaneck Nursing Center in Teaneck, and Amboy Care Center in Perth Amboy. All three are operated by Michael Konig.

"We're happy that we averted a strike," said Roy Garcia, vice president of the New Jersey chapter of the union. "No one ever wants to go on strike."

Konig could not be reached for comment.

Garcia said the union and management had been negotiating the new contract for months. The agreement came together a few minutes before a strike was planned.

"It was a very intense five minutes," Garcia said.

Garcia said the contentious issues in the contract talks were wages, adequate healthcare benefits and the ability to retire with dignity. Garcia did not give details of the tentative deal, which faces a ratification vote by the union's members.

"I think at the end of the day it's really about valuing the work of nursing home caregivers and how important they are to our society," he said. "They're taking care of the sickest, oldest and most vulnerable members of our community."

However, Garcia said employees in New Jersey still don't receive the benefits they deserve. Nursing home workers, such as nursing assistants and housekeeping staff, work difficult jobs in a high-risk environment with low wages, resulting in a "tremendous" turnover rate, he said.

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