

Hip Hop Activist Wyclef Jean To Be In CT

Written by Robert ID1356

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Internationally acclaimed Hip Hop rap artist / activist Wyclef Jean will join community residents and workers to call on Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) to negotiate over the impact of a proposed cancer center on the community.

Wyclef Jean will be the star attraction at a rally, march and free 90 minute concert on May 21 on behalf of members of New Haven based-CORD (Community Organized for Responsible Development) and YNHH workers who have been fighting for a union.

The event starts with a warm-up rally at 2:30pm on the Route 34 Connector median between Orchard Street and Sherman Avenue, New Haven, with the social activist Mr. Jean taking the stage between 3 and 4 p.m. He will then lead a march of community residents, hospital workers, political, labor and religious leaders through the streets of New Haven to Yale-New Haven Hospital, Yale University Medical School's teaching hospital.

"We're really excited to share our cause with so many supporters from around the state and region" says Deborah Dimbo, a patient registrar at YNHH for 35 years and a community activist with CORD. "Yale-New Haven Hospital is the second largest employer in the city, but it doesn't pay any city taxes. So they have a special obligation to the community, and to their workers who provide care to the patients. Yale-New Haven needs to negotiate with the people of their host city, not dictate to us."

The Service Employees International Union Local 1199 and CORD are co-hosting the concert and rally to demand that Yale-New Haven Hospital:

- 1) Sign a community benefits agreement over the impact of a new cancer center on the community;
- 2) Stop abusive debt collection procedures against patients without adequate insurance;
- 3) Agree to a fair union election process for 1,800 YNHH service workers who've been battling

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harassment, intimidation, arrests and terminations for seven long years in their quest for a union.

Known far beyond the hip-hop culture, Wyclef Jean is a two-time Grammy Award winner, producer, film score composer and social activist who immigrated from Haiti to Brooklyn as a child. He recently composed the score and the title song, "Million Voices" for the movie Hotel Rwanda.

SEIU 1199 New England represents health care workers in Connecticut. SEIU is the biggest union of healthcare workers in the country and, with 1.5 million members, is the largest union in the AFL-CIO.

To learn more about the hospital workers' struggle as well as the event (including directions and parking

information) please visit www.seiu1199nh.org .