

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE :

Monday, January 24, 2022

**CONTACT: Megan Gorman / mgorman@pasnap.com / 215.817.5781
Alex Lotorto / alotorto@pasnap.com / 570.362.0394**

Nurse Anesthetists at Wilkes-Barre General Vote Unanimously to Authorize a Strike

Their employer's inability to attract and retain certified nurse anesthetists at Wilkes-Barre General has led the nurses anesthetists there to signal their willingness to strike to improve conditions for their patients and themselves.

Wilkes-Barre, PA - Pushed to the brink by understaffing and forced to do more with much less, the certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) at Wilkes-Barre General – the professionals who intubate COVID-19 patients who require it at the hospital, giving breath to the facility during the pandemic – have said, “Enough!”

The Wyoming Valley Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Association has been in contract negotiations with their employer, Capital Anesthesia Solutions, since April 2021 with recruitment and retention of staff at the forefront of their negotiations. On Friday, they voted to authorize a one-day strike, for February 2nd.

“We can’t afford to lose any more CRNAs – we’ve lost 7 due to resignations since Capital came in August 2020, and we are down to 17,” says Anne Marie Micikas, president of WV CRNAA. “As nurse anesthetists, we are with our patients for every breath, for every single procedure that requires anesthesia. We have added regional pain blocks and epidurals to our responsibilities. We intubate every COVID patient. We are working short-staffed and doing more with less.”

The nurse anesthetists have informed Capital Anesthesia Solutions that they are willing to bargain every day until an agreement is reached. There is one bargaining date scheduled on Friday, January 28th – coincidentally, the final day of National CRNA Week.

“We are losing staff to neighboring facilities because we are treated unfairly, and that affects patient care,” says Nancy Dines, vice president of WV CRNAA, said, “We continue to urge management to put patients before profits, and we are hopeful they will do that on Friday. In standing up for ourselves, we are fighting for our patients.”

Capital Anesthesia Solutions is an Ohio-based anesthesia contractor that was retained in August 2020 by Wilkes-Barre General Hospital when the previous anesthesia contractor left due to a dispute regarding unpaid bills.

The Hospital is owned by Tennessee-based Community Health Systems, the largest for-profit hospital company in the United States. Their hospital system in northeast Pennsylvania includes five hospitals operating as “Commonwealth Health”.

The Wyoming Valley Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Association is an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than

9,000 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth and was founded on the belief that patients receive the best care when clinical-care staff have a strong voice to advocate for both patients and themselves.

#####