

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Friday, November 12, 2021**

**Nurses at Pottstown Hospital Reach A Critical Contract Deal That Further Protects Patients and Nurses Alike**

*Yesterday evening, the nearly 200 members of Pottstown Nurses United, a PASNAP local, voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new three-year contract with significant staffing improvements, ensuring safer conditions for both their patients and themselves.*

**Pottstown, PA** - Pushed to the brink by chronic and increasingly severe understaffing, the members of Pottstown Nurses United made safer staffing--a quality of care issue--the centerpiece of their campaign in bargaining for a new contract and in so doing, won language that directly addresses their staffing concerns and the risks that understaffing heightens for both patients and caregivers.

*"More than a year and a half into the pandemic, the system that's supposed to support nurses, and therefore patients, is in crisis," says PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. "Our workloads have shot through the roof while our staff numbers have dwindled due to burnout and short-sighted, bottom-line decisions. This contract, with its emphasis on safe staffing, prioritizes excellence in patient care as well as the health and safety of frontline bedside caregivers. We are thrilled."*

**The contract calls for the formation of a staffing committee composed of union members and management. The new Nurse Practice and Staffing Committee--made up of the union president plus eight additional union members, the Chief Nursing Officer, and up to eight additional management personnel--will review staffing levels and create unit-specific staffing grids that cannot be changed without consultation with the Nurse Practice and Staffing Committee.**

In addition to the creation of a committee devoted to ensuring safe staffing and prioritizing patient care, the new contract enshrines:

- **Successorship:** In the event that the hospital is sold, the new owner will have to 1) recognize the union and the contract, and 2) hire bargaining unit staff at their current wage rate and recognize their unused, accrued ETO.
- **A Much Needed Reprieve for On-Call Staff:** OR staff, who are always on call, have been dangerously overworked for many months, and as a result, 13 OR staff members have left the hospital in the last half-year, exacerbating the problem for those who remain. According to the new contract, on-call staff are now guaranteed 10 hours of rest time between shifts if they request it. Nurses will not be required to work more than 16 hours in a 24 hour period, including work performed on call. And, among other changes, an On Call Committee made up of OR staff, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Chief Medical Officer will be formed to address the use of on-call staff for non-emergency surgeries.
- **Wage Scale Equity and Increases:** All nurses, including pool and weekend, who didn't receive a full \$5 per hour wage increase in July 2021 will be given the increase retroactive to October 10, 2021, creating a proper wage scale that includes a pair of additional experience steps--one at 15 years, the other at 25. For the second and third year of the contract, all nurses will receive 2 percent wage increases and step increases, if applicable.

“When we negotiated this contract, we put the safety and care of our patients first, and it shows in the final contract,” said Lori Domin, R.N., President of Pottstown Nurses United. “I’m really looking forward to all it ensures--to improved staffing, to retention of our current nurses with a proper wage scale and successorship language, and above all else, to working together toward the same goal--excellence in patient care.”

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals represents more than 9,000 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth.