

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Megan Othersen Gorman / mgorman@pasnap.com / (215) 817-5781

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114 Frontline Caregivers at Warren General Hospital Avert a Strike, Reaching A Critical Contract Deal That Further Protects Patients and Respects Healthcare Professionals

Nurses and healthcare professionals at Warren General Hospital win a new three-year contract with significant staffing improvements, ensuring safer conditions for both their patients and themselves.

Warren, PA - Today, the 114 nurses and healthcare professionals that make up the Warren General Hospital Professional Employees Association (a PASNAP local) overwhelmingly ratified an agreement they forged with the hospital on Monday--one that directly addresses their concerns over staffing and the risks that understaffing heightens for their patients, the Warren community, who have shown the caregivers tremendous support during their contract campaign.

“A year and a half into the pandemic, the system that’s supposed to support bedside caregivers, and therefore patients, is in crisis,” says PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. “Our workloads have shot through the roof while 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 well-being of frontline caregivers. We are thrilled.”

The new contract strengthens staffing at Warren General by requiring the hospital to take measures to address short staffing on a unit due increased patient acuity and increased census, among other reasons. These measure include:

- Assigning a float nurse, if available
- Pulling available qualified staff from other units
- Seeking volunteers among nurses who have expressed an interest in picking up shifts
- Calling casual nurses to work (a casual nurse is a nurse who is not regularly scheduled to work and who is employed under an arrangement whereby the person may elect to work or not when requested to do so)
- Having supervisors work and assist
- Adding ancillary resources

“The contract we negotiated is a step in the right direction for our patients’ well being,” says maternity unit nurse Charlene Fohrd, R.N., an 8-year Warren General Hospital veteran and co-president of the Warren General Hospital Professional Employees Association, on behalf of the entire Bargaining Committee. “We were able to build a framework for safer staffing and a better plan for staff recruitment and retention. Our first concern is always our patients and we’re grateful to the community for supporting us in this effort.”

In addition to staffing guidelines, the caregiver’s new contract includes measures to strengthen nurse retention and help to attract additional staff to the hospital, both of which will also improve staffing and, therefore, the quality of patient care:

- **Enhanced retirement:** Those in the pension plan will be able to keep an additional contribution from the hospital until September 30, 2024. And the hospital will match 75% of up to 9.5% of employee contributions to the 401K; currently, employees are receiving 75% of 6% of salary in their 401K.
- **Increased wages:** Nurses will see an average pay increase of 4.5% in year 1 and 3% in years 2 and 3 of the contract, with some staff seeing over 17% increases in salary over 3 years.

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP) represents more than 9,000 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth. The Warren General Hospital Professional Employees Association is a local of PASNAP.