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**Nurses at Armstrong County Memorial Hospital Submit Strike Notice;
Set to Strike on March 13**

Working for more than two years during a deadly pandemic, nurses at Armstrong County Memorial Hospital have been sounding alarm bells about critical staffing issues at the hospital, but their warnings have fallen on deaf ears. Today, the nurses signaled they will walk out to grab management's attention.

Kittanning, PA -- The nurses at Armstrong County Memorial Hospital, who have selflessly risked their own health to care for their community during the worst pandemic of our lifetimes, have long pressed hospital management to invest in effective nurse recruitment and retention efforts. Management has repeatedly refused. The nurses feel they have no other means of making management listen than to strike – for themselves and for their patients.

“Healthcare professionals enter the field because we care,” said Maureen May, R.N., president of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals. “We are the primary advocates for our patients, and we don’t walk away from that role lightly. But we will send a message, via a strike, that you have to do the right thing by your patients and your staff. This is our message—to the hospital, to the public—that we’ve had enough.”

Nurse understaffing is a quality of care issue. Recent studies have shown that for every patient added over 4 per nurse, the risk of death for a surgical patient increases by 7 to 16%. Understaffing increases errors and patient complications, and it also reduces patient satisfaction even as it amplifies caregiver burnout and fatigue.

In the last year, more than 40 nurses have left ACMH. They’re leaving because they are burned out from short staffing, underappreciated and undervalued. They’re going to other hospitals in the region where they are making \$6 more per hour. Those who remain – the very nurses who have repeatedly risked their lives and the lives of those they loved for the last two years – need help. They typically file short-staffing forms (a report a nurse files when their unit is understaffed) three or more times every week.

What the nurses want is simple: They want hospital management to do more to retain nurses so they can provide the ACMH community with excellent care.

“A strike is the last thing we want – we love our patients and our community. But we want to provide uncompromised care, and we can’t do that when the hospital is hemorrhaging nurses,” says Cassie Wood, R.N., a 12-year ACMH nurse and president of ACMH Nurses United. “We delivered the strike notice because we felt we had no other choice. We want to improve conditions at the bedside so that our nurses will stay and our patients will receive the high quality care they deserve.”

The 220 nurses that comprise ACMH Nurses United have been in contract negotiations with the hospital since July 2021 with recruitment and retention of staff at the forefront of their stalled

negotiations. In late January, they voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, if necessary. This morning, the nurses submitted their 10-day strike notice and will be walking off the job at 7 a.m. on Sunday, March 13th to highlight management's refusal to prioritize nurse retention and therefore patient care.

"ACMH needs to invest in their nursing staff now to provide future generations with high quality care close to home," says ICU nurse Kayley Baker, R.N. "We are doing this for our patients."

ACMH Nurses United 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.

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