

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“Our Communities Will Be in Jeopardy.” Frontline Healthcare Professionals Hold the First of Two Consecutive Informational Pickets to Protest Dangerous Service Shutdowns and Unit Closures in the Prospect Health System**

*Today, nurses, technical specialists, professionals, and paramedics who work within the Crozer Health system took action at Crozer-Chester Medical Center to protest Prospect Medical Holdings’ callous disregard for the patients and families of Delaware County.*

**Upland, PA** – As Prospect Medical Holdings moves toward the sale of the Crozer Health system to nonprofit Christiana Care, the California-based for-profit has prioritized profit over the needs of the Delaware County community, stripping away critical medical and mental health services on their way out, further taxing a community that has already suffered greatly during the pandemic.

**Today, nurses, technical specialists, professionals, and paramedics who work within the Crozer Health system staged an informational picket to protest these service closures and Prospect’s callous disregard for the patients and families of Delaware County.**

After announcing a series of service closures in January, February and March of this year, Prospect announced in April that unless the surrounding municipalities pay for the service, it will curtail – with no plan in place for dealing with the vacuum the decision will create – the Advanced Life Support response vehicle emergency medical service, which consists of vehicles (called chase cars) staffed by paramedics, who have the highest level of prehospital care education. Chase cars accompany ambulances to the scene of an emergency and can provide more trauma care than EMTs.

“You get rid of these cars in Delaware County, and you’re short-handing the entire system,” said Crozer-Chester Medical Center paramedic Kate Denney, NREMT-P. “You’re pulling paramedics from farther away, dangerously increasing response times, and ultimately crippling those systems. There’s a trickle down effect to these decisions that is very scary for our community.”

“It’s going to be a disaster,” said Jeffery Witters, a paramedic supervisor at Crozer-Chester Medical Center and the Vice President of the Crozer Chester Paramedics Association. “You can sugarcoat it any way you want to, but people are going to die from these decisions. I got a call recently. I was the primary paramedic on the scene; it took me 17 minutes to get there, and I waited 35 minutes for an ambulance. You short-staff the whole region by reducing EMS services in an area that is already in need of more service, not less, and people are going to die.”

Also in April, Prospect announced the end of, essentially, all substance abuse/addiction treatment in the county with the impending closures of:

- the DCMH Outpatient Substance Abuse Clinic
- The CCMC Inpatient Acute Substance Abuse/Addiction Unit (First Steps)

- The CCMC Crisis Center
- All mental health and substance use disorder treatment outpatient services at the Community Campus in Chester

“You’re closing the Crisis Center *now?*” said longtime Crozer-Chester Medical Center nurse Peggy Malone, R.N., president of the Crozer-Chester Nurses Association. “Suicides are already up due to the pandemic. Overdoses are already up for the same reason. You shut down mental health services, and incidents of violence will rise. Our police and our ERs will be overrun. Our county will be in chaos if what Prospect has planned is allowed.”

“I shudder to think of how this is going to impact the patient care I will be giving in the near future,” said Don Webb, R.N., an Emergency Department nurse at Crozer-Chester Medical Center for the past 19 years and vice-president of the Crozer Chester Nurses Association. “We have always initiated emergent care to mental health patients and we will continue to do that – it’s part of what we do in the Emergency Department. But if we don’t find medical cause to keep those patients, we send them to our Crisis Unit – the very unit Prospect announced it is closing – for mental health care. With no Crisis Unit, we cannot release patients who are a harm to themselves or others, and if we fill rooms with patients who cannot be released, we will have little room to care for the medical emergencies that present.”

This cascade effect of Prospect’s profit-driven decisions is what concerns not only the nurses, paramedics, technical specialists and professionals, but the elected officials who represent Delaware County, as well. Many of them – including state Sen. John Kane, state Rep. David Delloso, state Rep. Mike Zabel, state Rep. Leanne Krueger, and County Councilmembers Dr. Monica Taylor and Richard Womack – were on hand to lend their support.

“Our community has been good to Crozer,” said City Councilmember Womack. “Crozer has been a part of this community for many years, and for Crozer to do what they’re doing – to walk out because of profit, not worry about the clinics, not worry about the people’s health, not worry about our community – it’s despicable.”

“Our community has always supported the PASNAP nurses at Crozer,” said Malone. “They have walked with us as we have fought for safe staffing ratios, better working conditions, fair wages and much more. They took care of us during the pandemic – the hardest time in our careers. They sent food. They made thank you and hero signs that hung on our units. They took care of our families while we were working. We are here today to try to repay them for all of their support. We are here to give a voice to the many members of our community who will be affected by the service closures Prospect is threatening. We will not stand by and let Prospect do this to Delaware County without a fight!”

A second informational picket is planned for next week at Delaware County Memorial Hospital, which is also within the Crozer Health system. DCMH has borne the brunt of numerous service closures announced by Prospect this year.

### **INFORMATIONAL PICKET #2: May 11, 2022**

**WHO:** In addition to nurses and technical specialists from Delaware County Memorial Hospital, elected officials and community allies will be there.

**WHERE:** Outside Delaware County Memorial Hospital, 501 N. Lansdowne Ave, Drexel Hill, PA

19026

**WHEN: Wednesday, May 11th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**RALLY WITH SPEECHES BY ELECTED OFFICIALS TO BEGIN AT NOON**

The Crozer Chester Nurses Association, Crozer-Chester Paramedics Association, Crozer-Chester Society of Pharmacists, Crozer-Chester Professionals United, Delaware County Nurses Association, Delaware County Technical Employees Association, and Delaware County Professionals United are affiliates 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.