**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nurses at St. Chris, Einstein, St. Mary and Mercy Fitzgerald Ready to Strike**

*Within the last 24 hours, more than 2,500 Philadelphia-area nurses have taken steps toward a strike to guarantee patient safety after hospital executives at all four institutions, on the cusp of a second deadly wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, have refused to put basic patient protections and fairness for nurses in the nurses’ contracts.*

**Philadelphia, PA** – Pushed to the brink by unsafe staffing that seriously undermines patient safety, the frontline nurses at four Philadelphia-area hospitals have taken steps toward a strike to protect their patients and themselves on the cusp of a second deadly wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The nurses are seeking a commitment to safe minimum staffing levels from each of the four hospitals.

**Nurses at St. Mary and Mercy Fitzgerald, both part of Trinity Health, issued notices for a simultaneous two-day strike on November 17th and 18th. Nurses at Einstein and St. Chris voted to authorize their bargaining committees to call a strike, but notices have not yet been issued.**

* **St. Mary Medical Center:** The 800 nurses at St. Mary in Bucks County have been bargaining with management for a first contract for more than a year, but St. Mary (and Mercy Fitzgerald) owner Michigan-based Trinity Health Systems has so far refused to address the staffing and patient safety concerns that are the nurses’ number-one issue. The nurses are asking for a commitment to safe minimum staffing levels in the nurses’ contract and for affordable healthcare, especially when provided at their own facility. Headquartered in Livonia, Michigan, Trinity is one of the country’s largest nationwide healthcare organizations, encompassing more than 90 hospitals and behavioral health facilities and had $8.8 billion in cash and investments on hand as of March 30th of this year. St. Mary is one of Trinity’s most profitable hospitals. **This morning, the nurses at St. Mary submitted their 10-day notice for a strike that will begin on November 17th.**
* **Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital:** The 260-plus nurses at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Delaware County have documented 33 occurrences of unsafe staffing at the hospital in the last month alone, yet Mercy Fitz owner Trinity Health System, as at St. Mary, has refused to commit to safe minimum staffing levels in the nurses’ contract. This refusal to safely staff the hospital, together with Trinity’s insistence on a healthcare plan that forces nurses to pay as much as $5,500 out of pocket for healthcare at their own hospital, has forced the nurses to strike in order to protect their patients. **This morning, they submitted their 10-day notice for a strike that will begin on November 17th.**
* **St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children:** Recent cuts to staffing in the Emergency Department and throughout the hospital have rendered St. Christopher’s, a Level I Trauma Center, ill prepared to provide the basic level of care needed by Philadelphia’s most vulnerable patients. Last December, St. Christopher’s was purchased by Reading-based Tower Health and Drexel University. On the day of purchase, the St. Chris nurses were informed that management would no longer recognize their contract, including the safe-staffing levels that they had been in place since 2018. **The 500 St. Chris nurses voted overwhelmingly yesterday to authorize a strike, however a notice has not yet been issued.**
* **Einstein Medical Center:** Einstein’s nurses suffer from serious staffing shortages in many of the hospital’s units as well, leading to poor morale and high turnover—a dangerous cycle for both patients and for nurses. Despite this, management has repeatedly refused to implement safer staffing ratios and other contract provisions to improve health and safety. Outgoing Einstein CEO Barry Freedman received a roughly 100 percent wage increase for the fiscal year ending July 2019, bringing his total compensation past $4 million, way out of market for a nonprofit health system of its size. **The 1,000 Einstein nurses voted overwhelmingly yesterday to authorize a strike, however a notice has not yet been issued.**

“It’s incredibly unfortunate that nurses feel they have to strike in order to protect their patients,” says PASNAP president Maureen May, R.N. “On the cusp of a resurgence of COVID, it’s more important now than ever that hospitals have safe minimum staffing levels in place so that patients can get the care they need at the bedside.”

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals represents 8,500 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth. Approximately 800 of those nurses work at St. Mary, 260 at Mercy Fitzgerald, 500 at St. Christopher’s, and 1,000 at Einstein.