**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2020**

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

**Nurses Locked Out by Management in the Midst of a Pandemic**

*Nearly 800 nurses at Trinity-owned St. Mary Medical Center walked out Tuesday for a two-day strike to protest dangerous staffing issues at the hospital, as Covid numbers within the hospital continue to rise. Trinity’s response? To lock out the nurses for an additional three days.*

**Langhorne, PA --** Trinity Health Systems, a Michigan-based healthcare conglomerate and owner of St. Mary Medical Center in Bucks County, has responded to its nurses collective plea for additional staffing--*the* single biggest issue behind the nurses’ 48-hour strike, due to end at 7am tomorrow morning -- by hiring out-of-state agency nurses and locking out their own nurses until 7 a.m. Sunday morning.

“We tell Trinity we need more nurses, in large part because, as Trinity has acknowledged, we’re 15 years behind in wages, and they tell us they can’t afford to pay us a competitive wage,” says Jim Gentile, R.N., a surgical services nurse who has been at St. Mary for more than 35 years. “If they can’t find the money to recruit and retain more nurses, did they magically find several million dollars in the back of a drawer to pay the agency nurses?”

The nearly 200 replacement nurses Trinity hired are estimated to be costing the company up to $3.6 million.

“All we want is a full complement of staff and the wages and workplace culture to attract and retain experienced nurses,” says critical care nurse Donna Halpern, R.N. “And instead of taking our concerns seriously and fixing the serious problems at the hospital, Trinity chose to let us strike and lock us out for three additional days. We think the money they are paying to out of state replacement nurses would be better spent on the nurses who work here every day and are part of our community.”

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.

“In the last two years, 243 nurses have left St. Mary--a 30 percent turnover,,” says Mother Baby nurse Beth Redwine, R.N. 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 to $7 more per hour.”

“There are simply not enough nurses at the hospital to provide the care that is needed--especially during a pandemic,” says Bill Engle, R.N. who has been a nurse at St. Mary for 15 years in the Med-Surge Telemetry Unit. “All we want is for Trinity to hire more nurses and to do more to retain them so that we can provide the St. Mary community with the care they deserve.”

**“Speaking of patient safety, where are the temporary agency nurses they brought in from?” asks Gentile. “Are they coming from areas overwhelmed by the virus? Did the hospital test the nurses for COVID? Did the nurses quarantine for 14 days? These are the questions I think people should be asking Trinity.”**

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals represents 8,500 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth.