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**St. Mary Nurses Return to Work Post-Lockout, Heads Held High**

*Nearly 800 nurses at St. Mary Medical Center walked out for 48 hours on Tuesday to protest dangerous staffing levels at the hospital. The hospital responded by punitively locking out the nurses for an additional three days. This morning, the nurses returned to their patients.*

**Langhorne, PA --** The nurses at St. Mary Medical Center in Bucks County have been pressing owner Trinity Health Systems for years to agree to safe minimal staffing levels to ensure that the hospital is safely staffed--critical for both patient and nurse safety, especially during a pandemic. When the corporate leadership of Michigan-based Trinity refused to do so, the nurses voted overwhelmingly to hold a 48-hour strike to force Trinity to pay attention and protect their patients.

Instead, Trinity hit back at the nurses, locking them out for an additional three days. The nurses returned en masse this morning at 7 a.m. and remain eager to head back to the bargaining table and resume talks with the administration to further protect their patients.

“We walked back in this morning with our heads held high,” says Bill Engle, R.N. “We are proud of what we accomplished. We stood together, and we stood up for ourselves and our patients and made our voices heard. Now that St. Chris, Einstein, Lower Bucks, Suburban, Jeanes and Mercy Fitzgerald have all reached agreements that ensure basic staffing levels, it’s time for Trinity to do the same.”

**Just 20 miles south, 1,100 Einstein Medical Center nurses with similar concerns over poor staffing averted a threatened strike on Thursday by winning a new contract with better staffing and improved working conditions. And just yesterday, 500 nurses at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia, who were also seeking to ensure basic staffing levels, reached a tentative agreement with co-owners Tower Health and Drexel University, and averted a threatened strike.**

**Lower Bucks, Suburban, Jeanes and St. Mary sister hospital Mercy Fitzgerald also all settled contracts with their nurses recently. The leaves Trinity and Prospect as the only two remaining health systems in the Philadelphia area with outstanding nurses’ contracts.**

“The reason we demonstrated outside the hospital was to call attention to the serious concerns about staffing that are at the heart of our contract fight,” says Esmond Herry, R.N., who works on St. Mary’s MG4 Unit. “Trinity chose to fight its own nurses, whom they locked out of the hospital, rather than address the serious issues within it.”

“Nurses and healthcare professionals have selflessly sacrificed during the COVID pandemic at great personal risk to themselves,” said PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. “They deserve respect. They need help. And their patient communities need and deserve to be further protected.”

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