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**Nearly 800 St. Mary Nurses Reach a Critical Deal for a First Contract**

**After An Extended, Hard-Fought Campaign**

*Nurses at St. Mary Medical Center in Bucks County organized more than a year ago over patient safety concerns. Today, they ratified their first contract enshrining both patient and nurse protections.*

**Philadelphia, PA --** After more than a year of at times very contentious bargaining, nearly 800 nurses at St. Mary Medical Center in Bucks County have won a contract with enforceable staffing guidelines that will greatly enhance patient care, and significant wage increases that help recruit and retain nurses. The contract provides an overall 18% increase over the five years of the contract.

**The new contract represents a major step forward in providing safe patient care and the ability to recruit and retain hospital staff.**

*“Nurses and healthcare professionals have worked tirelessly and selflessly sacrificed during the COVID-19 pandemic at great personal risk to themselves, and they will continue to be called on to do so for many months to come,” said PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. “With the resolution of this contract fight as the virus surge continues in Bucks County and the greater Philadelphia area, the needs of our dedicated frontline workers have been acknowledged and respected and their patient communities are further protected. We are thrilled.”*

The nurses’ new contract addresses:

* **Safe staffing –** The new contract provides enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the hospital hires and schedules enough nurses to meet its staffing guidelines, and that the guidelines cannot be changed without prior discussion with the nurse union representatives. There will be a staffing committee of nurses from every unit that will meet with the hospital on a monthly basis and will monitor adherence to the guidelines on an ongoing basis. The hospital also agreed to restore the IV Team, which the nurses believe will help staffing and reduce the rate of hospital-acquired infections.
* **Wages –** The new contract remedies years of wage inequities by placing all St. Mary nurses on a wage scale based on years of nursing licensure. Nurses will be guaranteed annual across-the-board increases plus increases when they move to the next step on the wage scale, which is based on years of RN licensure. Nurses placed on the scale will see an average increase of 5% following ratification. In subsequent years, the scale will increase by 3%, 3%, 4% and 3% for an overall increase of 18% over the life of the contract, not including step increases.
* **Fair and Transparent Policies, Protections and A Continued Voice at Work --** The contract includes numerous provisions that for the first time provide fair and transparent policies including self-scheduling, job bidding, just cause and just culture protections in cases of discipline, a neutral grievance procedure for enforcing the contract, health and safety protections, and a number of committees that will ensure nurses have an ongoing voice in decisions that affect them.

The St. Mary nurses organized more than a year ago over concerns related to staffing, wages, and the arbitrariness of hospital policies, all of which impacted nurse morale and the ability of nurses to provide the best care possible to their patients. St. Mary and sister hospital Mercy Fitzgerald in Delaware County are both owned by Trinity Health Systems. Based in Livonia, Michigan, Trinity is one of the country’s largest nationwide healthcare organizations, with more than 90 hospitals and behavioral health facilities.

“This fight was always about our community and our ability to care for them in the best way we can,” says Bill Engle, R.N. “Our community has always had our backs, and this contract, with its staffing language and new wage scale, will go a long way toward helping us to have theirs.”

 “After more than a year of negotiations, I’m excited to have this done,” says Anne DeMille, R.N., a nurse with deep roots at St. Mary--”to have the contract ratified, and to move forward doing what we do best--caring for our patients, especially in this time of great need.”

“We now have a starting point for going forward,” says Donna Halpern, R.N, a longtime Critical Care nurse at St. Mary. “The first bricks have been laid on a very solid foundation, and we are thrilled for ourselves, for our community and for the future of nursing.”

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