



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nearly 1,000 Geisinger Community Medical Center Caregivers Vote Overwhelmingly to Authorize a Strike

99% OF CAREGIVERS VOTED YES

“As healthcare workers, we want nothing more than to be at the bedside with our patients. Geisinger’s insistence on no sick time benefit has taken things too far. A system that discourages employees from calling off when sick is a danger to our community.”

Scranton, PA – Six weeks after staging a mammoth informational picket outside the hospital, 940 frontline healthcare workers spanning multiple job classifications at Geisinger Community Medical Center voted yesterday to authorize their bargaining committees (the caregivers comprise three PASNAP-affiliated locals, all of which are in bargaining now) to call 1-day strikes, if necessary.

The RNs, LPNs, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, technicians, and degreed professionals, including Pharmacists, Respiratory Therapists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Chaplains among others, voted yesterday by overwhelming majorities to authorize their bargaining committees to submit 10-day strike notices if they deem them necessary.

In a vote that closed at 9:30 p.m. last night:

- **100% of Advanced Practitioners voted YES to authorize a strike.**
- **99% of RNs and CRNAs voted YES to authorize a strike.**
- **98% of Technicians, LPNs, and degreed professionals voted YES to authorize a strike.**

“It is unfortunate that it’s come to this,” says Perioperative Care Nurse Kali Gargone, Membership Chair of the Northeast Pennsylvania Nurses Association at GCMC and a member of PASNAP’s Executive Board. “As healthcare workers, we want nothing more than to be at the bedside with our patients. Geisinger’s insistence on no sick time benefit has taken things too far. A system that discourages employees from calling off when sick is a danger to our community.”

- The Northeast Pennsylvania Nurses Association (NEPANA) are 535 RNs and CRNAs who work at the bedside at Geisinger Community Medical Center in Scranton. They have been unionized for more than 15 years; their contract expired on January 12, 2024.
- The GCMC LPNs, Technicians, and Degreed Professionals are 345 Licensed Practical Nurses, technicians, and degreed professionals (Pharmacists, Respiratory Therapists, Physical Therapists,

Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Chaplains, among others). They have been bargaining since May 2023 for their first contract.

- The GCMC Advanced practitioners are 56 nurse practitioners and physician assistants. They are bargaining for their first contract.

All three groups share critical concerns that affect patient care and caregiver retention, including unsafe staffing that endangers patients and staff alike; lack of in-hospital protections and safety; and alarming disrespect for caregivers who risked their lives to care for the Scranton community during the COVID pandemic and continue to serve that community with passion, dedication, and expertise.

On January 1, 2024, Geisinger – a \$7 billion company – zeroed out the Extended PTO time, which is the employees’ sick time, for every member of the new bargaining units who don’t yet have contracts. The hospital has also proposed to eliminate all sick time for registered nurses and nurse anesthetists as well. Some longtime employees have hundreds of hours in the bank.

“We were once considered family here at CMC,” says Registered Radiologic Technologist Pam Guido, a 22-year veteran of the hospital. “Everyone respected each other. And that’s how we treat our community – like family, with respect. Unfortunately, we don’t receive the same respect from our administration. They have now taken away our sick time, which means we’re unable to care for ourselves and, by extension, our patients.”

Extended PTO is used when caregivers’ become sick, injured, or go on medical leave, including maternity leave. By eliminating it, Geisinger is forcing frontline caregivers to use vacation time when they’re sick. **The irony is mind-boggling: GCMC – a *healthcare provider* – actively denies the health needs of the very people they entrust to provide patient care.**

Geisinger has also proposed wage *decreases* for several departments and *no limit* on increased health insurance costs, which they uniquely control as owner of their own health insurance plan.

The caregivers have had enough.

Negotiations are scheduled to take place over five dates through the end of the month. No strike date has been set in the hopes of reaching an agreement, but the caregivers have signaled their willingness to strike if necessary..

The three bargaining units of Geisinger Community Medical Center caregivers are affiliates of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 10,000 frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across Pennsylvania and was founded on the belief that patients do better when critical care staff have a voice to advocate for their patients and themselves.