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**Caregivers at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital Secure a Major Act 102 Win Years in the Making**

***Pennsylvania Department of Labor Fines Wilkes-Barre General Hospital for Flagrant Violations***

**Wilkes-Barre, PA** – Last month, for the first time in the history of Act 102 – the 2009 law that bars healthcare facilities from requiring direct caregivers to work more than their regularly scheduled shifts – the Bureau of Labor Law Compliance within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry secured a long-sought-after settlement with Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, which has been in flagrant violation of the law *for years*.

At the 11th hour, with 42 complainants from Wilkes-Barre General Hospital set to give testimony, the hospital settled, incurring a \$12,000 fine plus prolonged mandatory oversight from the Bureau:

- Within two months of the settlement, Wilkes-Barre General and the Bureau must meet to discuss ongoing and future compliance with Act 102.
- Once a year for three years, Wilkes-Barre General must host a mandatory virtual training on Act 102, conducted by the Bureau, for managers and supervisors responsible for staffing direct caregivers who aren't physicians.
- Twice a year for three years, Wilkes-Barre General must provide the Bureau with a list of open and available direct caregiver positions.

"It's a win for everyone," says longtime Cardiovascular ICU nurse Joyce Sciandra, RN, Vice President of the Wyoming Valley Nurses Association at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and a complainant in the case. "It's a win for nurses, who won't be forced to stay beyond their shifts; it's a win for patients, who won't have nurses who are exhausted and working well beyond their shifts; and it's a win for administration because if staff feels happy and feels that administration cares about them, it reflects well on them."

"I'm glad we spoke up and the Department of Labor held the hospital accountable," says Cath Lab (catheterization laboratory) Nurse Judy Martin, RN, treasurer of the Wyoming Valley Nurses Association and a complainant in the case. "On the day I was mandated – in clear violation of Act 102 – I was working a 12-hour shift. That 12-hour shift became a 16-plus-hour shift. Every decision in healthcare should come down to patient safety, and that decision by the hospital was not safe for my patients."

"Empirical data clearly and objectively identifies that lack of sleep and excessive hours decrease cognitive abilities, concentration, motor skills, and memory," says President of PASNAP Maureen May,

RN, an Infant Intensive Care Unit nurse at Temple University Hospital. “Nurses and healthcare workers need all these functions to provide safe, competent care. Healthcare workers and nurses are not machines; we are human beings, and we take care of human beings. I am proud that the nurses and healthcare advocates at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital fought and won protections for themselves and, more importantly, for their patients.”

*The Wyoming Valley Nurses Association is an affiliate of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents 10,000 frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across Pennsylvania and was founded on the belief that patients receive the best care when clinical-care staff have a strong voice to advocate for both patients and themselves.*