



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**More Than 500 Nurses and Technical Professionals at Fox Chase Cancer Center Vote
Overwhelmingly to Authorize a Strike Notice to Owner Temple Health
For a Strike Beginning June 4th**

94% of RNs and Technical Professionals Voted YES

“Administration says they care about patient care. Show us. Respect us. Listen to us. Then – and only then – will we believe you.”

Philadelphia, PA – Yesterday, more than six months into bargaining for their first Union contracts with employer Temple Health, 500-plus nurses and technical professionals who work at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Northeast Philadelphia put Temple on notice.

A combined 94% of both Locals voted to authorize a strike notice to Temple for a strike to begin on Tuesday, June 4th.

“We’ve had enough of the disrespect and languid responses from administration,” says Supportive Oncology and Palliative Care Nurse Maria Klinger-Gonzalez, RN, a 13-year veteran of Fox Chase Cancer Center. “They don the guise of good-faith bargaining, hoping that their delays and lack of impetus will dishearten us. But they have galvanized us more. We are hoping that this overwhelming vote will provide the catalyst for them to take us, the care we provide, and our patient population seriously.”

“Temple needs to get serious,” says Jarrett Brown, MSHI, RT(T), a radiation therapist and 15-year veteran of Fox Chase. “Their wage proposals for a lot of my colleagues are considerably lower than what they currently make! They’re asking us to move backward. We Unionized to move forward in terms of protections, resources, and respect.”

In bargaining, Temple has proposed cutting retirement matching and making the caregivers’ highly punitive attendance policy even more punishing during a post-pandemic time when caregivers are fleeing the bedside and retention of skilled, experienced health professionals is more important than ever. Temple has also rejected contract language that would ensure minimum safe nurse staffing levels – a critical, quality of care issue – at Fox Chase.

Numerous studies have shown that hospitals in which nurses care for fewer patients each have better patient outcomes, including lower patient mortality rates, lower readmission rates, and shorter lengths

of stay. Plus, research has shown that the benefits of better staffing also extend to RNs: Hospitals with better nurse staffing have lower rates of nurse burnout and less job dissatisfaction, and nurses at better staffed hospitals are less likely to leave their employers because those RNs are not risking their license and moral injury on a daily basis to care for more patients at a time than is safely possible.

“No one wants to walk away from our patients,” says Fox Chase Ambulatory Care Nurse Sue Repkoe, RN, BSN, “but we’ll do it if we feel we have to – to advocate for future patients, for future patient care, and for future nurses. I want people to get into nursing. I want nurses to have what we need to give our patients the care they deserve. And I’ll fight for that.”

“We formed a Union because we need a voice to better advocate for our patients and ourselves,” says Rossana Caputo, RN, a 17-year veteran of Fox Chase Cancer Center, “and we’re seeing that in bargaining, too. Temple has rejected our proposals to put safe staffing levels in our contract. And they are actually trying to harden their already punitive attendance policy, which we feel is very unfair. Other Temple facilities don’t have this policy – not Jeanes, not Temple Main. We feel that we are Temple. We are one. And we shouldn’t be punished for being sick and calling out. Administration isn’t punished for being sick. Why should we be?”

Temple Health likes to tell its employees across its multiple campuses: “We are ONE TEMPLE,” using the tagline, “The Best Care, Wherever You Are.” But the employees’ experiences working at Temple Health’s satellite campuses don’t bear that out – a reality that has inspired a spate of recent organizing within the Temple Health System, including the nurses and technical professionals at Fox Chase.

“All we want is to be treated fairly and to have a voice to advocate for ourselves and our patients, who need and deserve the best care we can provide,” says FCCC CT Technologist Kristy Emmett. “You’d think Temple Health would want the same thing, but they’ve been fighting us every step of the way.”

“Administration says they care about patient care,” adds Klinger-Gonzalez. “Show us. Respect us. Listen to us. Then – and only then – will we believe you.”

Summary of issues attached.

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Fox Chase Techs United (135 technical specialists who voted to unionize to have a voice on the job to advocate for themselves and their patients on June 7, 2023) and Fox Chase Nurses United (nearly 400 Fox Chase Cancer Center nurses who voted to unionize for the same reasons on June 20, 2023) are affiliates of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 11,000 frontline nurses and allied professionals across Pennsylvania. PASNAP represents 12 Locals across three campuses within the Temple Health System.