



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Friday, January 19, 2024

CONTACT: Megan Othersen Gorman / [mgorman@pasnap.com](mailto:mgorman@pasnap.com) / (215) 817-5781

### **Geisinger Community Medical Center, a \$7 Billion Company, Takes Sick Time Away From Employees**

Nearly 1,000 Geisinger Community Medical Center Employees Across Multiple Job Classifications to Picket Outside Their Facility On **MONDAY, JANUARY 22ND** to Call Out the Hospital's Callous Tactics And To Protect Their Patients and Themselves

**"We are the heartbeat of this hospital, tirelessly working to ensure the well-being of others. Now, it's our turn to stand up for ourselves. We will not allow the erosion of our hard-earned benefits."**

Scranton, PA – 940 frontline healthcare workers representing four different bargaining units at Geisinger Community Medical Center, all of them in contract negotiations now, will picket outside the hospital this **MONDAY, JANUARY 22ND**.

The participating caregivers span multiple job classifications including RNs, LPNs, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, technicians, and degreed professionals such as Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Chaplains, but they share critical concerns that affect patient care and caregiver retention: 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.

"We were a community hospital long before Geisinger bought the facility," says Physician Assistant Skyler Wilcha, P.A., a member of the Geisinger Allied Professionals Union, which is bargaining for their first contract now. "And while 'community' is still a part of our name, it doesn't feel as though community is something our administration is prioritizing."

# **Geisinger: \$7 Billion Company Takes Away Employees' Sick Time**



In fact, Wilcha and her colleagues did not receive a merit increase on January 1st, as is customary at GCMC. The hospital increased the caregivers' healthcare costs. And on January 1, 2024, the hospital 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 are the heartbeat of this hospital," says Jen Huber, RN, president of the Northeast Pennsylvania Nurses Association at GCMC. "We work tirelessly to ensure the well-being of others. Now, it's our turn to stand up for ourselves. We will not stand for the erosion of our hard-earned benefits."

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 sick, even as cases of respiratory infection (COVID, RSV, and flu) are spiking in our region and prevalent within the walls of the hospital.

"This picket is about injustice – the injustice of a \$7 billion company taking from its caregivers and, by extension, its patient community," says Huber. "We want the community to know how unjustly the people who are dedicated to their care and well-being are being treated."

**An informational picket is an event that helps raise community awareness; the caregivers attending the informational picket are either off from work that day or on a break.**

**Full Media Advisory to follow on Monday. Summary of issues attached.**

**INFORMATIONAL PICKET  
MONDAY, JAN 22ND, 2024**

<b>WHO</b>	RNs, LPNs, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, technicians, and degreed professionals (Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Chaplains, among others) who work at Geisinger Community Medical Center
------------	--

<b>WHERE</b>	Outside Geisinger Community Medical Center, 1800 Mulberry St., Scranton, PA 18510
<b>WHEN</b>	<p><b>MONDAY, JANUARY 22ND</b></p> <p><b>6:30 AM to 8 AM</b></p> <p><b>11 AM to 1 PM</b></p> <p><b>3:30 PM to 5:30 PM</b></p> <p><b>RALLY WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS TO BEGIN AT NOON</b></p>
<b>WHY</b>	<p>At the core of all the caregivers’ negotiations are shared quality of care issues including unsafe staffing, in-hospital safety concerns, and respect for caregivers who risked their lives to care for the Scranton community during the COVID pandemic and continue to serve their community with passion, dedication, and expertise. Case in point:</p> <p>In the midst of an onslaught of flu, RSV, and COVID cases, the hospital is actively trying to take away their caregivers’ extended PTO (sick time) and lowering the cap on their PTO banks, which would mean sick or sidelined caregivers would be forced to use vacation time instead.</p>

*The five bargaining units of Geisinger Community Medical Center caregivers are affiliates 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 do better when critical care staff have a voice to advocate for their patients and themselves.*