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Office of Cancer Research Professionals Within Fox Chase Cancer Center Vote “YES” to Unionize

“I’m Looking Forward to Working to Ensure Fair Working Conditions and Pay for All of Our Wonderful Colleagues Who Fight Tirelessly to Beat Cancer.”

Philadelphia, PA – Tonight, 84 clinical research RNs, clinical research coordinators, and clinical research data specialists, financial analysts, and other professionals within the Office of Cancer Research at Fox Chase Cancer Center voted overwhelmingly to unionize with PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals. The vote count was completed after voting closed at 6:30 p.m.

The OCR professionals, who practice under the Temple Health umbrella, voted by 83% to unionize with PASNAP.

The vote occurred just one day after 1,000 Temple Health employees and PASNAP members across three campuses picketed outside their hospitals to urge Temple to invest in staff retention and quality patient care and in the same week that 300 nurses and technical specialists who practice within the Temple Health system at Chestnut Hill Hospital voted overwhelmingly to unionize with PASNAP.

“I am so excited about this vote,” says OCR Clinical Research Coordinator Katie Meeder, MPH. “I’m looking forward to working to ensure fair working conditions and pay for all of our wonderful colleagues who fight tirelessly every day to beat cancer.”

Fox Chase Cancer Center became part of the Temple Health system in 2012. As the storied institution gradually became more corporate, a raft of changes occurred and, over time, frustrations mounted.

“What happens here is that we train a lot of great people, people who are new to research. And then they usually leave us because other places can offer them better things,” says OCR Data Specialist Erin Holland. “It would be really encouraging to have them want to stay here, and I think our Union, with our newly earned seat at the table, can accomplish that.”

Further spurring Union interest and organizing within the Temple Health system, the nurses and allied health professionals at Temple Main in North Philadelphia negotiated new three-year contracts last fall that represented major steps forward in protecting and retaining seasoned caregivers and in providing safe and exceptional patient care. The key issue in the Temple Main nurses’ campaign was safe staffing,

and the enforceable staffing guidelines they negotiated into their contracts along with significant market adjustments have allowed the main hospital to increase recruitment and retention of its nursing staff – and have inspired caregivers at Temple’s other campuses to seek similar seats at the table to better advocate for their patients and themselves.

“We want to improve patient care, and we want our well trained staff to stick around,” says Holland. “That, in a nutshell, is why we voted ‘YES!’”

The OCR professionals join more than 3,000 Temple caregivers represented by PASNAP – 2,250 nurses and allied professionals at Temple Main, 360-plus nurses at Jeanes Hospital, 75 nurses in Temple’s outpatient clinics, 35 CRNAs who practice at Jeanes Hospital and Fox Chase Cancer Center, 23 research nurses at Temple Main, as well as nearly 500 nurses and technical specialists at Fox Chase Cancer Center who unionized with PASNAP this summer and are currently in bargaining for their first contract.

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP), represents 10,000 frontline nurses and allied professionals across Pennsylvania, including more than 3,000 in the Temple Health system. PASNAP was founded on the belief that patients do better when critical care staff have a voice to advocate for their patients and themselves.