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NURSES AT ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN RATIFY A NEW 3-YEAR CONTRACT

10 Days After Picketing Outside Their Facility During Nurses Week, Nearly 500 RNS Who Care for Philadelphia's Most Vulnerable Patient Population Win a Contract That Prioritizes Staff Retention and Excellence In Patient Care

"We care deeply about our patients, and we deeply respect this community. It's why we fought so hard for a contract that will attract and retain nurses. It all comes back to patient care for us, and that is how it should be."

Philadelphia, PA – Ten days after staging an impactful Nurses Week picket outside their facility in North Philadelphia, 485 nurses at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children ratified a new 3-year contract today that will go a long way toward improving the safety of their workplace and quality of care for their young, very vulnerable patients.

"We worked incredibly hard, over four long months, to prioritize the needs of our patients – to increase safety, excellence in patient care, and staff retention," says longtime St. Christopher's ER nurse Becky Murphy, vice president of the St. Christopher's Hospital for Children Nurses United. "This contract does that and more."

The vote for St. Christopher's Hospital for Children Nurses United's new three-year contract, completed tonight at 9 PM, was an overwhelming 92% in favor of ratification.

At the core of the nurses' negotiations were significant quality of care issues including unsafe staffing, respect for caregivers, and low retention rates for nurses. The nurses' previous contract expired on January 31, 2024.

The nurses' new three-year contract includes:

- **Significant staffing improvements:** Safe nurse-to-patient staffing is a critical quality-of-care issue and was a central concern for the nurses. In negotiations, the nurses fought successfully to keep the staffing language and staffing grids they had in their previous contract in the new contract. Plus, they won a new weekend program for better staffing on the weekends and a commitment

to add a resource nurse in the ER for better staffing there and maintain a resource nurse in Med Surg.

- **Improvements to health and safety for nurses:** Tower agreed to multiple measures to further protect nurses from workplace violence, including installing weapons detectors, posting security guards in each unit, and agreeing to, in time, remove RN last names from badges.
- **Healthy wage increases to increase nurse retention:** All full-time nurses will receive a \$1,600 signing bonus; part-time and per diem nurses will receive \$1,100. Plus, some St. Chris nurses are seeing increases of as much as 15% over three years.

The theme for Nurses Week, which ended this past Sunday, is “Nurses Make the Difference.” At no hospital is this more spot on than St. Christopher’s, whose patient population is Philadelphia’s most vulnerable children, many of whom are burdened with significant barriers to care: no transportation, parents who don’t speak English, parents who aren’t able to stay with their children at the ER or inside the hospital because they don’t get paid when they don’t show up to work.

“We were absolutely united in our efforts to make sure we got the staffing and resources we need in order to take excellent care of our patients,” says Emergency Room nurse Free Russ, RN, Grievance Chair for St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children Nurses United. “We weren’t moving off of that.”

“We care deeply about our patients, and we deeply respect this community,” says Outpatient Nurse Deborah Young, RN, St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children Nurses United Member at Large. “It’s why we fought so hard for a contract that will attract and retain nurses to better care for our patients. It all comes back to patient care for us, and that is how it should be.”

St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children Nurses United is an affiliate of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 11,000 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.