

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Frontline Healthcare Professionals at Einstein Medical Center-Philadelphia Picketed Today – During National Nurses Week – to Call Attention to Serious and Persistent Quality-of-Care Issues Inside the Hospital That Hurt Both Patients and Caregivers



Safe Staffing Saves Lives signs obscure the Einstein Medical Center sign during an informational picket held today by the Einstein RNs.

Philadelphia, PA – Nurses at Einstein Medical Center-Philadelphia marched on Broad Street today outside the hospital to highlight serious quality-of-care issues – including chronic unsafe staffing, an alarming escalation in incidents of workplace violence, and a lack of respect for caregivers – on the inside. Together, these issues create unsafe patient-care conditions and an environment that significantly inhibits retention of seasoned staff.

During National Nurses Week, the Einstein nurses say they wanted to alert their patients – the Einstein community – and put Jefferson Health, the owner of Einstein Medical Center, on notice.

“Jefferson would rather spend money on a Super Bowl commercial than invest in the staff who carried them through the worst pandemic of our lifetimes,” says Einstein ICU nurse Patrick Kelly, RN, President of Einstein Nurses United.

Einstein Nurses United (ENU) is currently negotiating a new contract, their first with Jefferson Health. At the center of their negotiations is the health system’s failure to use the significant monetary resources at its disposal to invest in quality of care issues like safe staffing, retention of veteran caregivers, and measures to protect their staff from workplace violence.

“All through the pandemic, you left us alone,” said 35-year Einstein veteran Carla Le’coin, RN, Political and Community Engagement Chair for ENU, addressing hospital management. “You didn’t provide us with PPE – we wore trash bags and repeatedly re-used our masks. We were scared, we sobbed in our cars after every shift. And still, you left us alone. But we know we are not truly alone. We have the community and we have each other, and together, we have power.

“Jefferson, we are going to use that power to fight for what we need and what our patients in North Philadelphia deserve!”

Seasoned caregivers have been leaving Einstein in droves due to unsafe conditions at the bedside. Staff vacancy rates – which hurt both patients *and* caregivers – are dangerously high.

From January of 2022 through March of 2023 roughly 280 RNs have quit Einstein Philadelphia, a number that does not include RNs who transferred out of the Philadelphia campus to work at other Jefferson Health locations. This turnover has created more than 300 vacant union nursing positions in the hospital – a vacancy rate that is both dangerous and unsustainable.

Standing in solidarity with the caregivers on the picket line were state Senators Nikil Saval and Sharif Street; state Representatives Darisha Parker, Danilo Burgos, Chris Rabb, Kevin Boyle, Jose Giral, and Ben Waxman, among others; Philadelphia City Councilmembers Kendra Brooks and Katherine Gilmore Richardson; and Mayoral candidate Helen Gym. A host of candidates for City Council and City Commissioner as well as labor leaders were also on hand.

“I care,” asserted state Representative Darisha Parker, who represents the Einstein Medical Center community, “and we’re going to make sure that this administration cares and we’re going to make sure that they deliver for their staff and for this community.”

In closing, Kelly pointed out that neighboring hospitals and health systems have invested in their staff, reduced their reliance on traveling nurses, and staunched the flow of bedside caregivers from their facilities. Not Jefferson. Referring to what has become an empty slogan, he added:

“Why won’t the hospital listen when we tell them what we need to retain nurses and to provide our patients with the care they deserve? We’re heroes, aren’t we? Or have you forgotten that already?”

See attached Issues Summary for more information.

Einstein Nurses United is an affiliate of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 9,000 frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across Pennsylvania.

