



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nurses at Suburban Community Hospital Speak Out Against Owner Prime Healthcare and the California-Based Conglomerate's Dangerous Staffing Decisions and Unit Closures That Have Left Pennsylvania Patient Communities High and Dry**

**Nurses at Lower Bucks Hospital, Also Owned By Prime Healthcare, To Picket Outside Their Hospital on MONDAY, OCT 30TH**



**Plymouth Meeting, PA** – At Suburban Community Hospital in Norristown and Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol, where nearly 200 unionized RNs and LPNs are currently negotiating new contracts with mutual owner Prime Healthcare – a California-based corporate umbrella for dozens of U.S. hospitals – staffing is dangerously and persistently low, and patient care and bedside RNs are suffering.

**Today, nurses at Suburban picketed outside their hospital to alert their community to the dangerous conditions inside the hospital and how poorly Prime is treating its caregivers.**

“We’ve been a union for more than 50 years, and we’d never been outside the hospital until Prime bought us in 2016,” says Suburban ICU nurse Shannan Giambrone, RN, longtime co-president of the

Suburban General Nurses' Association. "Since then, we've been outside every year, fighting to protect our patients and our profession."

Prime is a California-based employer; California is the only state with legally mandated nurse to patient ratios. Prime is capable of staffing safely and to the law in California but flat out refuses to do so in Pennsylvania, endangering their patients and their nurses, who daily risk both their license and moral injury to consistently care for more patients at a time than is possible to do safely.

Further adding to the sky-high stress levels of its caregivers and Prime's difficulty retaining and recruiting nurses, Prime provides its nurses with grossly inadequate health insurance and fights them every step of the way on any medical claim they make. Additionally, at the bargaining table, Prime has proposed to cut sick leave for non-FMLA eligible nurses (such as part-time) and also to reduce the sick time that nurses get.

**"A healthcare company should be setting the tone for what healthcare is,"** says Giambrone. "Their whole business depends on people seeking out good healthcare. But when it comes to their employees, they don't feel the need to provide us with the ability to seek out good healthcare in areas where Prime doesn't offer it. We do our job for our patients and the hospital really well. They haven't done right by us at all."

"I grew up on welfare and I worked hard to have a decent career so I could afford my bills and be self-sufficient," says Carrie Walz, RN, who was recently laid off from Suburban when Prime abruptly ceased accepting behavioral health patients there in late September, despite worsening mental health and escalating substance abuse among adults nationwide. "But I couldn't afford my own family's healthcare at Prime and had to turn to Medicaid for additional help. I work in healthcare, and I still couldn't get the healthcare I needed when I was there."

**On September 27, 15 nurses in Suburban's Behavioral Health Unit were notified that their jobs were being eliminated and that the hospital was no longer accepting admissions to that unit. All told, 30 to 40 jobs were abruptly cut and the Suburban patient community left high and dry.**

"This *healthcare company* is serving no one," says Robin Payne-Gradel, RN, also a former Suburban behavioral health nurse who was also laid off when Prime closed her unit, "certainly not the community and certainly not the staff. I find it reprehensible."

Suburban Community Hospital and Lower Bucks Hospital are two of three Philadelphia-area facilities owned by Prime, the fifth-largest for-profit health system in the United States. **The nurses at Lower Bucks Hospital will be picketing outside their facility next MONDAY, OCTOBER 30TH.** See below.

Prime is the only medical facility system in the country to have settled three federal civil cases alleging Medicare fraud in the last six years.

**Summary of Issues attached.**

**INFORMATIONAL PICKET 2: MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023**  
**Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital**

<b>WHO</b>	Nurses from Lower Bucks Hospital will be joined by nurses from Suburban Community Hospital, elected officials, and community allies.
<b>WHAT</b>	An informational picket is an event that helps raise community awareness; the nurses attending the informational picket are either off from work that day or on a break.
<b>WHERE</b>	Outside Lower Bucks Hospital, 501 Bath Rd, Bristol, PA 19007
<b>WHEN</b>	<b>Monday, October 30th from 7:30 AM to 10:30 AM</b>
<b>WHY</b>	Prime’s failure to staff their Pennsylvania hospitals has created unsafe conditions in which there are not enough registered nurses to meet staffing guidelines. As a California based employer, the only state with legally mandated nurse to patient ratios, Prime is capable of staffing safely and to the law in California but refuses to do so in Pennsylvania. At bargaining for the previous contract, their attorney told the Union that they do not have to because there is no law to force them to do so.

*Suburban General Nurses’ Association and the Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital are affiliates of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 9,000 frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth and was founded on the belief that patients receive the best care when clinical-care staff have a strong voice to advocate for both patients and themselves.*