



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **150 Frontline Nurses at Lower Bucks Hospital Overwhelmingly Ratify A New Union Contract, 15 Months In the Making, That Will Further Protect Lower Bucks' Patient Community**

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**Safe Nurse Staffing – a Key Quality of Care Indicator – Was the Nurses' Primary Focus Throughout Negotiations**

**BRISTOL, PA, DECEMBER 12, 2024** – Today, after 15 months of intense bargaining, the nurses at Lower Bucks Hospital overwhelmingly ratified a new 3-year contract that meaningfully benefits both patients and caregivers by ensuring Lower Bucks RNs have the staff and resources they need to provide safe and exceptional care to their patient community.

**The vote for the nurses' new 3-year contract, completed today at 9 p.m., was an overwhelming 83% in favor of ratification.**

“Even now, several years post-COVID, the system that’s supposed to support bedside healthcare professionals and therefore patients is in crisis,” says PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N., a longtime Temple University Hospital nurse. “Following the worst pandemic of our lifetimes, hospital staff numbers have dwindled nationwide due to burnout. This contract, with its emphasis on staffing and measures to improve retention, acknowledges the contributions of frontline caregivers and by prioritizing their numbers and respect for what they bring to the bedside, also prioritizes patient care.”

**At the core of the nurses' negotiations with out-of-state owner Prime Healthcare were safe staffing and recruitment and retention of experienced caregivers – critical quality of care issues that directly impact the care the residents of Bristol receive when they are at their most vulnerable.**

“Our focus was to fight for staffing levels that would allow us to provide safe, quality care to the patients of this community,” says Lower Bucks Hospital ICU Nurse Anna Carlin, RN, co-president of the Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital. “During negotiations, our thoughts were always with our patients.”

Echoing her co-president, longtime Lower Bucks Hospital ICU Nurse Shirley Crowell, RN, co-president of the Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital, says: “Nurses from every department, full time, part

time, and per diem, stood together for the longest negotiations we have ever had and would not back down. Our commitment to getting a deal that protects our staff and our patients was unparalleled.”

The nurses’ perseverance paid off. Their new 3-year contract includes:

- **Meaningful commitments to staffing – a key quality of care indicator.** The Union fought to hold off massive staffing cuts and retain seasoned staff, and created new RN positions to assist with staffing. The new contract also provides protections against layoffs.
- **Additional benefits for the recruitment and retention of nurses.** Nurses will receive increased differentials, on-call pay, and holiday hours as well as protections for experience wage increases and other key benefits, all of which should help to attract new hires and retain current staff, ensuring the safety of our patients and our community.
- **Healthy wage increases, also to increase retention of skilled caregivers.** Nurses will receive overall wage increases averaging 14% over the life of the contract. Additionally, staff will receive increases based on years of nursing experience, which should go a long way toward attracting caregivers and improving retention of existing staff, all to the benefit of the Lower Bucks Hospital patient community.

Lower Bucks Hospital was founded by a community grassroots movement in 1954. It is known for its outstanding medical staff and skilled and compassionate nurses. Prime Healthcare is a California-based corporate umbrella for dozens of U.S. hospitals.

“We fought hard in this contract to maintain our standard of care for the patients of Lower Bucks Hospital,” says Lower Bucks Hospital Med-Surg Nurse Carol Halner, RN, vice president of the Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital. “High-quality care for our patients is of the utmost importance to every nurse here. It’s at the heart of everything we do, whether it’s at the bedside or the bargaining table.”

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**The Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital** *is an affiliate of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents 11,000-plus frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across Pennsylvania and was founded on the belief that patients receive the best care when clinical-care staff have a strong voice to advocate for their patients and themselves.*

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