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**Nearly 300 Frontline Caregivers at Chestnut Hill Hospital Picket Outside the Hospital to Alert the Community to Serious Staffing Issues Inside the Hospital and to Protect Their Patients and Themselves**

***"Enough Is Enough!"***

**Philadelphia, PA** – Today, 190 nurses and 89 allied health professionals (including radiology techs, surgical techs, radiation therapists, and LPNs) who practice under the sprawling Temple Health System at Chestnut Hill Hospital, all of them in contract negotiations now, picketed outside the hospital to alert the community both to what's happening inside its walls and to what's happening – or not happening, as the case may be – at the bargaining table.



PASNAP nurses and techs at Chestnut Hill Hospital have been bargaining for their first contracts for eight long months. This month marks a year since they voted to join PASNAP, and they still don't have a contract – **or the staffing they need (a key quality of care indicator and the central issue in their bargaining campaign) to care for their patients and retain their Members.**

Today, they spoke out.

“Nurses are weary, and techs are tired of being looked over and disrespected,” said rally emcee Kadena Smith-Fleming, LPN, a Med-Surg Nurse at Chestnut Hill Hospital. “If this informational picket has one purpose, it’s to let the community know what’s going on in this hospital and to let Temple know that it stops now. Enough is enough!”

As part of a larger strategy to improve Temple’s market share and profit margins, and to ensure that Temple patients have myriad places to go in the region, Temple Health is using Chestnut Hill Hospital as a way to handle overflow from Temple Main and elsewhere in the health system, greatly increasing the hospital’s patient load without hiring to match the new level of work and patient acuity.

“Our nurses and techs work drastically short,” said Chestnut Hill ICU nurse Jim Smith, RN. “Lab and radiology techs are doing the job of at least three people. Nurses on the floor are forced to have six, sometimes seven, patients. Even more dangerous, myself and my colleagues in the ICU are sometimes forced to take three patients; the industry standard, to protect patients and nurses, is two patients for every nurse. With acutely ill patients, anything more is unsafe care.

“We have brought this up time and time again, and Temple flat-out refuses to listen.”

Wages for many positions at Chestnut Hill Hospital are well below market, which has significantly inhibited recruitment and retention at the hospital and exacerbated the staffing crisis there. There is a smaller percentage of positions for which wages **were increased during the pandemic**, and **Temple is proposing pay cuts for those positions**. These positions are in areas that were so alarmingly understaffed during COVID that wages in those select areas had to be raised in order to recruit much needed staff.

“During COVID, frontline nurses and technicians were considered superheroes and were very much appreciated,” said ICU nurse Barbara Strain, RN, MSN, CCRN, a 20-year veteran of Chestnut Hill Hospital. “Now we are underpaid, understaffed, and underappreciated.”

In its internal communications, Temple talks about being “at the forefront of nursing care” and of the “responsibility we have as nurses to advocate for patients, improve practices, and shape the future of healthcare” – which is exactly the goal of the Chestnut Hill Hospital nurses and techs. If that is the Temple Health standard, Chestnut Hill Hospital, as part of the Temple Health system, should meet that standard.

“We are simply asking that the nurses and techs at Chestnut Hill Hospital be treated fairly, equitably, and as professionals,” said Smith, “and Temple is refusing to do that.”

An informational picket is an event that helps raise community awareness; the caregivers attending the informational picket are either off from work that day or on a break.

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***Chestnut Hill Hospital RNs and Techs 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.***