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Nurses at Suburban Community Hospital Overwhelmingly Ratify A New Union Contract, 18 Months In the Making, That Will Further Protect Suburban's Patient Community

"Our new contract is a testament to the power of collective bargaining and to our nurses' unshakeable commitment to securing a better future for ourselves and for the patients we serve."

Saving Their Hospital, Retaining Skilled Nursing Staff, and Protecting Their Patients Were the Nurses' Primary Goals Throughout Negotiations

EAST NORRITON, PA, FEBRUARY 28, 2025 – Today, after 18 long and tumultuous months of intense bargaining, the nurses at Suburban Community Hospital ratified a new contract that meaningfully benefits both patients and caregivers by ensuring that Suburban's skilled nursing staff have the resources and incentives they need to stay on the job and caring for their patients.

The vote for the nurses' new 3-year contract, completed today at 8 p.m., was an overwhelming 93% in favor of ratification.

"Through unwavering dedication, perseverance, and the unbreakable solidarity of our members, we remained strong in our fight for better staffing to ensure patient safety, fair and competitive wages, and decent healthcare benefits," said longtime Emergency Department nurse Terena Stinson, RN, co-president of the Suburban General Nurses Association. "Our new contract is a testament to the power of collective bargaining and to our nurses' unshakeable commitment to securing a better future for ourselves and for the patients we serve."

In July, out-of-state owner Prime Healthcare, a corporate umbrella for dozens of U.S. hospitals, abruptly converted Suburban Community Hospital, a full-fledged critical care facility and a nearly 100-year-old community institution, into a "micro-hospital" – a dramatic contraction of services that involved discontinuing all surgeries and shuttering the ICU. The nurses' primary goals throughout their long negotiations were saving their hospital, retaining skilled nursing staff, and protecting their patients, many of whom have been seeking care at Suburban for decades.

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

- **Meaningful commitments to staffing – with increased staff to the Emergency Department and MedSurg tele units and nurses in support roles to ensure safe staffing levels.**

- **Additional benefits for the recruitment and retention of nurses.** Nurses will receive increased differentials, on-call pay, holiday hours, and paid sick leave 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 recruit and retain skilled caregivers.** Nurses will receive overall wage increases averaging at least 9% 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 Suburban patient community.

“RNs and LPNs from every department, full-time, part-time, and per diem, stood together for the longest negotiations we have ever had, including the first strike in our Union history, and we did not back down,” said Emergency Department nurse Octavia Rumer, RN, co-president of the Suburban General Nurses Association. Our commitment to getting a deal that improves our work and protects our patients never wavered.”

“Even now, several years post-COVID, the system that’s supposed to support bedside healthcare professionals and therefore patients is in crisis,” said 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 measures to improve nurse 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.”

The Suburban General Nurses Association 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 25 years ago 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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