

Northside Medical Center Nurses Give Notice for One-Day Strike

Written by Australian Business

Action Set for Sept. 24 After Management Refuses to Address Issues Linked to Quality Care

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio, Sept. 12, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Nurses at Northside Medical Center today gave notice they plan to conduct a one-day, unfair labor practice strike Sept. 24

The union representing the nurses issued the notice after noting that despite some progress in bargaining on Wednesday, the dialogue failed to produce an agreement on issues that could affect quality patient care.

"No one wants to go on strike, but we will take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the high standard of care for which Northside is known," said Eric Williams, president of the Youngstown General Duty Nurses Association. "For the last 15 months, the hospital's corporate owner, the Nashville-based, for-profit Community Health Systems, refused to even discuss issues that affect the Youngstown community. Our talks this week advanced the discussion, but they must move beyond their take-it-or-leave-it approach."

Williams said his members remain concerned that terms proposed by Northside management and CHS have the potential to undermine their ability to speak out in the future about issues such as safety and patient care. Nurses currently have the contractual right to bring up such concerns. Williams said nurses are also concerned about CHS proposals that could lead to the rationing of nursing care at the hospital.

"We continue to be prepared to meet around the clock—24 hours a day, seven days a week, if necessary—to get an agreement," said Kelly Trautner, deputy executive officer of the Ohio Nurses Association, the statewide union that is the official bargaining agent for the Northside unit. "We talked for four-and-one-half hours. We were hopeful that we could get a new contract,

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but the dialogue failed to produce an agreement."

She and Williams both said the unfair labor practice strike would be part of ongoing efforts to highlight the issues still dividing the two sides—matters that nurses believe could undermine Northside's award-winning patient care and clinical operations.

Last month YGDNA members overwhelmingly rejected the most recent offer from CHS executives and Northside management.

SOURCE Ohio Nurses Association