

With No Talks Scheduled, Northside Nurses Prepare for Strike on Tuesday

Written by Australian Business

National Union Leader Will Join Picketers During One-Day Job Action; Local Members to Gather Sunday Afternoon to Make Picket Signs

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio, Sept. 20, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Nurses at Northside Medical Center today moved ahead with preparations for a one-day, unfair labor practice strike at the hospital next week. At the same time, they renewed calls for management to return to the bargaining table.

Nurses have pressed Northside management and the Tennessee-based Community Health Systems Inc., the for-profit owner of the hospital, to discuss contract issues that could affect the quality of patient care. Some terms proposed by the employer have the potential to undermine nurses' 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.

Members of the Youngstown General Duty Nurses Association are also concerned about CHS proposals that could lead to the rationing of nursing care at the hospital.

"With no sign from hospital management that they are ready to schedule more talks, we intend to demonstrate our commitment to maintaining high-quality patient care," said YGDNA President Eric Williams. "For most of the last 15 months, the employer has refused to even discuss our concerns. That's why we will be on strike on Tuesday."

Williams, union members and supporters will gather to make picket signs from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Teamsters Union Hall, 1223 Teamster Dr.

When picketing begins at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, American Federation of Teachers Executive Vice President Francine Lawrence, a Youngstown native, will join nurses on the sidewalk outside the hospital. AFT is the national affiliate of the

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Ohio Nurses Association, the statewide union that is the official bargaining agent for the Northside nurses.

Nurses have said that the last bargaining session on Sept. 11 produced some progress toward establishing a dialogue between the two sides, but fell far short of generating an agreement. U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown has called on hospital management to reach a "fair and equitable" agreement with Northside nurses, and earlier this month offered his assistance in the process.

"Our bargaining team is ready to commit to negotiating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to resolve the issues that are keeping us from an agreement," said Kelly Trautner, deputy executive officer for ONA. "The real work that leads to a contract takes place at the bargaining table."

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND MEDIA AVAILABILITIES

Sign-Making Party – Sunday, Sept. 22

WHO: YGDNA President Eric Williams and other union leaders, nurses, family members and other supporters

WHAT: Gathering where nurses and others will be making signs they will carry while picketing during the one-day strike on Tuesday, Sept. 24.

WHEN: 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 22, 2013 – OPEN TO MEDIA

WHERE: Teamsters Union Hall, 1223 Teamster Dr., Youngstown, OH 44502

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One-Day Unfair Labor Practice Strike – Tuesday, Sept. 24

WHO: Northside nurses; YGDNA President Eric Williams; AFT Executive Vice President Francine Lawrence; other union leaders, and other supporters.

WHAT: One-day work stoppage; picketing; and rally.

SCHEDULE: 7 a.m. – Picketing begins, with Williams and Lawrence leading picketers.

11 a.m. – Rally on the picket line. Lawrence and other leaders will speak, with media availability afterward.

4 to 4:30 p.m. – Media availability with Lawrence and local leaders.

WHERE: Northside Medical Center, 500 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, OH 44501

SOURCE Ohio Nurses Association