

Some Northside Nurses Still Locked Out; Hospital Management Refuses to Bargain

Written by Australian Business

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio, Sept. 27, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Three days after their one-day, unfair labor practice strike, some local nurses at Northside Medical Center remain locked out and not allowed to care for their patients, reports Ohio Nurses Association.

Meanwhile, Community Health Systems Inc., the for-profit, Tennessee-based corporate owner of the hospital, still refuses to return to the bargaining table and address the nurses' concerns about issues involving quality patient care. It's been 16 days since CHS last bargained with nurses, and more than 15 months since the nurses' contract expired.

"When will this company begin listening to its nurses, the frontline caregivers who live and work here in Youngstown and understand the needs of their patients?" said Eric Williams, president of the Youngstown General Duty Nurses Association. "Instead of trying to resolve this dispute, CHS seems more intent on punishing nurses. When they do that, they're actually punishing patients."

Nurses were locked out when they attempted to return to their shift at 7 a.m. after a successful one-day strike Tuesday that drew attention to their concerns about contract issues that affect quality patient care. On the eve of the strike, management tried to intimidate the nurses by effectively threatening to fire them and by challenging a strike notice nurses issued earlier this month.

The one-day job action garnered widespread community support from clergy, labor, elected officials such as U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, and nurses from across the country. Brown, Ryan and others have called on the Nashville

-based CHS to return to the bargaining table and negotiate a fair and equitable contract with nurses.

"The support our nurses have received is gratifying but not surprising," said Kelly Trautner, deputy executive officer for the Ohio Nurses Association, the bargaining agent for Northside's

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nurses. "

Youngstown

is a close-knit town that values working families. Our nurses live in the community. They are neighbors, they attend the same churches, and their kids go to school together.

Youngstown

doesn't want some out-of-town corporation calling the shots."

Members of YGDNA have been concerned about proposals from CHS that could affect quality patient care. Those include a proposal to ration nurses by sending them home when patient admissions fluctuate, and a proposal that would undermine nurses' ability to speak out about patient safety and quality care issues.

SOURCE Ohio Nurses Association