

Nurses at Prime-Owned Lower Bucks and Suburban Hospitals Reach Contract Deals Ahead of Planned Joint Strike

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Philadelphia, PA--Nurses at Lower Bucks and Suburban hospitals have won the strongest protections for patient safety at any non-pediatric hospital in Southeastern Pennsylvania. By overwhelmingly voting to ratify contracts today at the two hospitals, nurses have contractual guarantees that the hospitals will have basic nurse staffing standards.

"The nurses at Lower Bucks and Suburban took a principled stand to demand decent staffing," said PASNAP President Maureen May RN. "In these new contracts, the nurses and the community won."

Late Friday evening, on the one-year anniversary of the nurses' first day of contract bargaining at Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol, the nurses there and at Suburban Community Hospital in Norristown reached an agreement with management, averting a simultaneous two-day strike at both sites planned for this Friday.

Lower Bucks Hospital is owned by Prime Healthcare, a for-profit conglomerate with 46 hospitals in 14 states; Suburban Community Hospital is owned by the Prime Foundation, a nonprofit entity. The nurses at both facilities won the ability to ensure their patients will have safe staffing for the life of the contracts.

"Nurses and healthcare professionals have selflessly sacrificed during the COVID-19 pandemic at great personal risk to themselves," said PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. "In the positive resolution of these contract fights, the needs of our frontline workers have been respected and their patient communities are further protected. We are thrilled."

The nurses' new contracts address:

- **Safe Staffing** – The nurses at both hospitals won the ability to ensure a minimum level of nursing care per patient, prioritizing patient outcomes and protection. These guidelines are enforceable--a first in these nurses' contracts.
- **Healthcare** – The nurses at both hospitals settled on a healthcare plan that allows staff to keep their own doctors for conditions they are already being treated for and to see primary care and specialists outside of Prime, all the while keeping their out-of-pocket costs low. In fact, the vast majority of members will see their premiums decrease substantially.

- **Nurse retention/wages** – Nurse wages at Lower Bucks were far below what Prime pays its nurses elsewhere. In their new contract, Lower Bucks nurses won raises of 4%, 4% and 3%, plus an additional 2% in step increases, which brings them closer to their colleagues at Suburban. Suburban nurses remain among the highest paid nurses in Montgomery County with most nurses seeing increases of more than 8 percent over the 3 years of the contract.

“Our nurses are dedicated to our community, our hospital and our patients,” said Shirley Crowell, R.N., president of Nurses Association of Lower Bucks Hospital. “This contract won improvements to ensure patient safety and improved working conditions. We’re proud to continue serving the people of Lower Bucks in the best way we know how.”

Shannan Giambone, R.N., president of Suburban Community Hospital Nurses United, echoed this sentiment: “This contract represents what both our nurses *and* our patients need. We are proud that standing together for patient safety and responsible healthcare coverage has won us a great contract ”

The Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals represents 8,500 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth.