

# Media Advisory

Friday, March 11, 2022

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## **Nurses at ACMH Hospital Set to Strike on Sunday**

*In the middle of a crippling staffing crisis, ACMH hospital management is refusing to invest in effective nurse retention efforts. The nurses are walking out to grab management's attention.*

**Kittanning, PA** -- In the last year, more than 40 nurses have left ACMH. They're leaving because they are burned out from short staffing, underappreciated, and undervalued. They're going to other hospitals in the region where they are making \$6 more per hour.

Even legislators in Harrisburg have recognized the severity of the current staffing crisis, recently appropriating more than \$333,000 to ACMH specifically to be used for staff retention and recruitment. Yet ACMH hospital management has refused to commit to using these funds, which will be available next month, for current staff – the frontline caregivers who carried the hospital through a pandemic.

**In eight months of negotiations, ACMH CEO John Lewis, who received a \$600,000 raise in 2020, has made no attempt to listen to or understand the nurses and their issues, much less talk to them about how best to resolve them. Instead, hospital management has denigrated the nurses' concerns, saying the disagreement between the two parties is "almost exclusively over money."**

"The truth is, effective nurse recruitment and retention is about respect," says Jerry Dunn, R.N., vice president of ACMH Nurses United. "If you're going to be greedy, focus your resources on executive compensation, and not fairly compensate and respect the nurses who brought you through a pandemic, you're not going to be able to retain them or provide high quality care to your community. We want to provide the best care for our patients, we can't do that with a skeleton crew."

"Nurses are fleeing the bedside not because we don't like being caregivers – we love our patients and our role as their advocates," says Cassie Wood, R.N., president of ACMH Nurses United. "What we don't like is feeling that the skill, experience, and commitment we bring to the job every day are grossly undervalued. That means that patient care is undervalued."

**The 220 nurses at ACMH have been in contract negotiations with the hospital since July 2021 with retention of staff at the forefront of their negotiations. They will be walking off the job from 7:00 a.m. Sunday, March 13 through 4:59 a.m. on Friday, March 18 to call attention to hospital management's refusal to prioritize nurse retention and therefore patient care.**

**WHAT:** ACMH Nurses Strike

**WHO:** In addition to nurses from the hospital, elected officials and community allies will be there for noon rallies on Sunday, 3/13; Tuesday, 3/15; Wednesday, 3/16; and Thursday, 3/17 to speak in support of the ACMH nurses and the community they serve.

**WHERE:** Outside ACMH Hospital, 1 Nolte Dr, Kittanning, PA 16201

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 13, at 7 a.m. to Thursday, March 17, at 7 p.m.  
7 a.m. - 7 p.m. daily

**NOON Rallies on Sunday, 3/13; Tuesday, 3/15; Wednesday, 3/16 and Thursday, 3/17;  
SPEECHES TO BEGIN AT NOON ON THOSE DAYS**

**WHY:** The ACMH nurses want hospital management to invest in effective nurse retention efforts to staff appropriately and prioritize patient care.

ACMH Nurses United is an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 9,000 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth and was founded on the belief that patients receive the best care when clinical-care staff have a strong voice to advocate for both patients and themselves.

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