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“This is *Our* Hospital.” On the Heels of their Crozer-Chester Medical Center Colleagues’ Informational Picket Last Week, Frontline Healthcare Professionals at Delaware County Memorial Hospital Held Their Own Picket Today to Protest Dangerous Service Shutdowns and Unit Closures in the Prospect Health System

Today, nurses, technical specialists, and professionals who work within the Crozer Health system took action at Delaware County Memorial Hospital to protest Prospect Medical Holdings’ callous disregard for the patients and families of Delaware County.

Drexel Hill, PA – As Prospect Medical Holdings moves toward the sale of the Crozer Health system to nonprofit Christiana Care, the California-based for-profit has brazenly prioritized profit over patient care, stripping away critical maternal health and ICU services on their way out, further taxing a community that has already suffered greatly during the pandemic.

DCMH has borne the brunt of Prospect’s cuts. Located in the most populated area of Delaware County, DCMH used to be a 133-bed hospital; it now has just 45 open beds. The hospital no longer has a maternal health unit, an ICU or any operating rooms. Delaware County residents must find a way to travel to Lankenau Hospital, in another county, for maternal health care. By forcing patients to travel farther, you’re increasing the risk of adverse outcomes.

“I’ve been here for 42 years, and I’ve never seen anything like this,” said DCMH Emergency Department nurse Angela Neopolitano, R.N., president of the Delaware County Nurses Association. “Prospect is well aware of what they’re doing – they’re putting the most vulnerable patients with the fewest travel options at great risk, and they have no plan in place to help them. It feels like a nightmare.”

“We’ve been cut back so much, we literally cannot cut back any more,” said Cindy Buonopane, DCMH’s lead CAT Scan tech and the president of the Delaware County Technical Employees Association. “To put it in real terms, if a technical specialist calls out sick, there are no X-ray, CT or ultrasound services available at DCMH. It’s that bad.”

“Right now, the community doesn’t even have access to very basic care,” said DCMH physical therapist Judy Brower. “If someone’s appendix bursts, for instance, they wouldn’t be able to seek care at DCMH because we no longer have any functioning operating rooms.”

The systemic hollowing out of healthcare in Delaware County is what concerns not only the DCMH nurses and technical specialists, but the elected officials who represent Delaware County and neighboring areas. Many of them – including state Sens. Amanda Cappelletti and John Kane, state Reps. Mike Zabel, Jen O’Mara, Gina Curry, Mary Isaacson, and Darisha Parker, and a representative from state Sen. Tim Kearney’s office – were on hand to lend their support.

State Rep. Mike Zabel, wearing a red PASNAP tee, called DCMH's owner, Prospect Medical Holdings, a healthcare vampire, intent on sucking resources out of the system: "They are stripping DCMH down to parts. If this were a patient, they'd go to jail for what they're doing."

"This is *our* home. This is *our* neighborhood. This is *our* hospital," he said.

"We are going to fight this with everything we have," said Neopolitano.

Last Wednesday, May 4th, nurses, technical specialists, professionals, and paramedics at Crozer-Chester Medical Center, also owned by Prospect Medical Holdings, staged an informational picket to protest service closures at Crozer – specifically, EMS service closures and the end of, essentially, all substance abuse/addiction treatment in the county, including the the DCMH Outpatient Substance Abuse Clinic, the CCMC Inpatient Acute Substance Abuse/Addiction Unit (First Steps), the CCMC Crisis Center, and all mental health and substance use disorder treatment outpatient services at the Community Campus in Chester.

The Delaware County Nurses Association, Delaware County Technical Employees Association, and Delaware County Professionals United are affiliates 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.