

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, October 1, 2022

CONTACT: Megan Othersen Gorman / mgorman@pasnap.com / (215) 817-5781

**Contracts Expire for 2,250 Frontline Healthcare Professionals at Temple University Hospital as Their Concerns About Serious Quality-of-Care Issues Inside the Hospital Go Unaddressed;
Unions Schedule Strike Authorization Votes**

Plymouth Meeting, PA – On the heels of a massive informational picket that drew more than 1,000 Temple University Hospital registered nurses and allied professionals to the corner of Broad and Ontario in North Philadelphia to protest dangerous and worsening conditions for caregivers and patients inside the hospital, Temple Hospital administration allowed the caregivers' contracts to lapse.

The caregivers have scheduled strike authorization votes for October 12.

"If Temple Hospital administration had come to the bargaining table willing to do what's needed to retain caregivers and staff the hospital properly so that we can provide the care our patients need and deserve, we wouldn't be where we are now, preparing to strike," said ICU nurse Mary Adamson, RN, president of the Temple University Hospital Nurses Association (TUHNA). "We want to be inside the hospital, caring for our patients, not outside the hospital, away from our patients. But that's where we'll be to protect our community."

"What Temple is fighting us on in our negotiations is the ability to care for our patients in the best way possible – the way they deserve," said certified pharmacy technician Carlos Aviles, president of Temple Allied Professionals (TAP). "This isn't just a contract for us. It isn't just a piece of paper. It's about our patients, it's about our professions. We're fighting for the respect due to both of them."

At the center of the caregivers' contract negotiations is Temple University Hospital's failure to use the significant monetary resources (profits and grants from the state) at their disposal to invest in quality of care issues like safe staffing, recruitment and retention, workplace violence prevention, and resources and protections for caregivers, all of which would help the hospital retain workers. Over the last 18 months, 450 seasoned nurses have left the bedside at Temple.

"Patient care is eroding," said Adamson, "and the administration is clearly disinterested in retaining its nurses."

TUHNA's and TAP's three-year contracts expired yesterday, September 30th. This will be the first post-COVID contract for both unions, and the caregivers' experience as frontline healthcare professionals at what WHYY has referred to as "ground zero" for the pandemic in Philadelphia has informed what they're fighting for at the bargaining table: resources, respect, and protections for caregivers.

"Temple needs to focus on keeping the dedicated staff who gave everything we had to our patients during the worst days of the pandemic," said respiratory therapist Journe Gries. "Management has no idea what the halls of the COVID hospital looked like. I work in a department that Temple did not fight

for or protect during COVID. Managers sat in their offices. They didn't get us the PPE, the equipment, the safety that we needed. I am fighting for a contract that will protect us because I never want to feel that afraid again. We are due for a change."

"Temple Hospital administration has the money to respect the caregivers who work every day to provide excellent patient care for the people of Philadelphia," said Aviles. " They have the money to invest in their people and their patients. But they are operating pro-profit in a nonprofit environment. The community needs to know that."

The Temple University Hospital Nurses Association and Temple Allied Professionals are affiliates of PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents more than 9,000 frontline nurses and healthcare professionals across Pennsylvania.