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Regional legislators concerned about health care negotiations

Mar 13, 2024

Editor

Legislators in the Northeast delegation serving in Harrisburg submitted this letter to the leadership of Geisinger Health System regarding contract negotiations. We share it with you and your readers.

Jaewon Ryu, MD, JD

President and CEO

Geisinger Health System

100 North Academy Ave.

Danville, PA 17822

Dear Dr. Ryu:

We, the undersigned members of the Northeast Pennsylvania Delegation, are writing to express our alarm about the stalled state of contract negotiations between your management team and the nurses, technical specialists, advanced practitioners, wound care nurses, and certified nurse midwives employed at the Geisinger Community Medical Center Campus. The nurses and healthcare professionals have brought to our attention numerous issues pertaining to the quality of care inside the hospital that impact both the caregivers and the medically needy, economically vulnerable patient community in Lackawanna County.

It is our understanding that unsafe working conditions are directly contributing to nurses leaving the hospital and further exacerbating the dangerously high staff vacancy rates. Despite this situation, the management team has yet to offer meaningful proposals addressing long-term staffing stability at Geisinger CMC. We understand that during bargaining, the nurses proposed that the hospital include their own staffing grids in their contract to incentivize the hospital to follow them but this was refused.

In addition, the healthcare professionals at the Geisinger Community Medical Center campus are rightfully frustrated that the hospital zeroed out the Extended PTO time (employees' sick time) for every member of the new bargaining units. Further, the proposal to eliminate all sick time for RNs and nurse anesthetists as well is an unacceptable way to treat these dedicated professionals.

We are deeply concerned about the health and wellness of your caregivers as well as the impact a potential strike would have on the residents of Scranton and the surrounding area, whose collective health hangs in the balance.

We urge you to resolve these issues as quickly as possible and acknowledge the vital work and service these caregivers have provided to residents of our city through the worst pandemic of our lifetimes.

We look forward to hearing from you how these issues will be meaningfully addressed to avoid an unnecessary and harmful labor dispute.

Sincerely,

Senator Marty Flynn

22nd Senatorial District

Representative Kyle Mullins

112th Legislative District

Representative Kyle Donahue



113th Legislative District

Representative Bridget Malloy Kosierowski

114th Legislative District

Representative Jim Haddock

118th Legislative District

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