



JNESO
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the professional health care union

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St. Mary's Hospital to Nurses and Professional Techs: This Nurses' Week, You're Fired

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PASSAIC – As the nationwide recognition of Nurses' Week kicked off on Saturday May 6th, St. Mary's General Hospital in the City of Passaic first violated their employees' rights to union representation and then notified them that they would be laid off. JNESO District Council 1, the union representing more than 400 nurses and professional technical employees at the Hospital, responded by filing an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

"Just as the public is set to demonstrate its gratitude for nurses - our country's most trusted profession - the St. Mary's Hospital notified us late Friday afternoon (May 5th) that they not only intend to lay off our members, but that they had already met with these employees without union representation," said Douglas Placa, Executive Director for JNESO District Council 1. "This is not only a slap in the face to our members, but a clear violation of their Weingarten rights."

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of NLRB v. J. Weingarten that employees have a right to union representation whenever they are called to a meeting with management. This is to ensure that the member is not only fully represented, but that their rights are protected. The right to this representation is commonly referred to as "Weingarten rights." Because the Hospital clearly violated this important principle, the union is bringing this issue directly to the National Labor Relations Board.

The Hospital also already struggles with not only inadequate nurse-to-patient staffing ratios but staffing in the technical disciplines," Placa argued that these layoffs would only make the situation worse.

"Laying off these employees in a busy Hospital like St. Mary's compromises patient safety. Period," said Placa. "Taking nurses from the bedside will be detrimental to the quality of care provided by St. Mary's Hospital."

The union is scheduled to begin collective bargaining with the Hospital as their current contracts comes to an end. Placa charged that the timing of these layoffs is an underhanded tactic used to intimidate the membership before entering bargaining. "It's pretty shameful that this is a blatant attempt by management to intimidate those who carry out patient care. The employees shouldn't be treated this way," Placa said. "We won't stand for it - we're taking this as far as we can and we will hold this Hospital accountable. Not only for our membership but for the patients who seek care at St. Mary's."

The Union is awaiting reaction from the National Labor Relations Board regarding its charge.

JNESO District Council 1 is a professional healthcare union representing over 5,000 healthcare professionals in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is an affiliate of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE). Learn more at: www.jneso.org.

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