



**JNESO**

DISTRICT COUNCIL 1, IUOE / AFL-CIO  
*the professional health care union*

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## **HEALTHCARE UNION POISED TO STRIKE AT VIRTUA HEALTH SYSTEM**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Tuesday, March 6, 2018**

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**North Brunswick, N.J.** – On Tuesday, March 6th JNESO District Council 1, IUOE-AFL-CIO, the union representing nearly 1,500 registered nurses at Virtua Health System in Voorhees, Marlton, Berlin, and Camden as well as Visiting Home Care nurses authorized a strike after rejecting the Hospital's most recent offer at the bargaining table. Citing violations of New Jersey's Hospital Licensing Standards and other staffing concerns, the union notified management and the state mediator that the membership authorized a strike if necessary. The union must provide ten days' notice to hospital management before striking - a move that JNESO has not yet made.

"The root of this issue stems from the hospital's violation of New Jersey's Hospital Licensing Standards surrounding patient acuity," said Virginia Treacy, RN and lead negotiator for the union. "The Hospital is required to evaluate how sick a patient is in order to put in place the staff needed to safely and effectively care for that patient. The Hospital just isn't doing it – and the New Jersey Department of Health has cited them for it."

"We have nurses that are not able to take a single break in a twelve hour shift," said Treacy. "And the reason is because the Hospital isn't evaluating acuity, and isn't staffing based upon patient need. So our members are on their feet for twelve hours or more without a meal or an opportunity to just sit down for a moment. It's an unsustainable workload for the nurses that could result in unsafe patient care if something doesn't change."

JNESO's first contract with Virtua became effective in 2000, and the union has only authorized a strike vote once since that time.

"The fact that we've taken a strike vote once in nearly two decades really speaks to how egregious this situation has become," said Doug Placa, Executive Director for JNESO. "We won't sit silent while our members are overworked and certainly won't allow for patient safety to be jeopardized. The Hospital needs to provide our members with the tools and staff necessary to provide the excellent care to which their patients have become accustomed and deserve".

The union and hospital management are not yet scheduled to meet again. Their contract expired on February 28, 2018.

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*JNESO District Council 1 is a healthcare union representing more than 5,000 nurses and other healthcare workers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. For more information, visit <http://www.jneso.org/>*