



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

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STRIKE AVERTED –VIRTUA NURSES AGREE TO NEW CONTRACT

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North Brunswick, N.J. – Nurses will not have to strike, after voting to accept a proposed contract with the Virtua Health System that impact the Voorhees, Marlton, Berlin, and Camden locations and Visiting Home Care nurses.

The new contract will provide some 1,500 Registered Nurses, members of the JNESO District Council 1, IUOE-AFL-CIO, professional health care union, with a new three (3) year agreement. The new contract covers a wide range of issues –staffing needs topping the list. Time-off, wage increases and pension were also important to the membership.

Negotiations have been extremely tenuous since the original contract expired on Feb. 28, 2018. A state mediator was appointed to help with the negotiations, but union members overwhelmingly authorized a strike vote on March 6th after rejecting the hospitals previous offer. This week, the Commissioner of Labor asked both parties to go back to the table and at 4 a.m. on March 14th, a tentative agreement was reached. The nurses bargaining unit voted to approve the contract late Thursday evening on March 15th.

“We are pleased to have reached an agreement, but there are still many issues that need to be dealt with that don’t just disappear once a contract is signed,” said Virginia Treacy, RN and lead negotiator for JNESO. “There are still concerns about patient acuity, and our nurses want to make sure steps are taken to properly evaluate how sick a patient is and have the hospital or facility staff accordingly to meet patients’ health care needs.”

“The bottom line is that both patient care and protecting our nurses have to be a part of the equation. When there is a deficit in one area, the other will suffer,” explained Yolanda Brewer, Director of Labor Services at JNESO. “We are hopeful that things will improve, but if the situation does not, JNESO will continue to file complaints to protect our nurses and their patients.”

“Our nurses have spoken loud and clear: unsustainable workloads, improper staffing and unsafe care are not acceptable and will not be tolerated” added Treacy.

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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/>