



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

TEL: (732) 745-2776
FAX: (732) 828-6343
WEB: WWW.JNESO.ORG
MEMBERS: (800) 292-0542

1225 LIVINGSTON AVE., NORTH BRUNSWICK, NJ 08902

ELFRIEDA V. JOHNSON, RNC, PRESIDENT
DOUGLAS A. PLACA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release

Contact: Stacey Ehling, 609-408-2461
stacey@princetonnc.com

STATEMENT:

JNESO Nurse Dawn Kulach loses her job in the fight for PPE protections at Virtua

North Brunswick, NJ (April 10, 2020) -- Nurse Dawn Kulach went public with her story about how she was sent home for wearing an N95 mask and gloves brought from home in order to protect herself during her shift at the hospital. Today she lost her job, but says she will continue to fight for what is right.

On Thursday, April 9, she met with her employer, Virtua -Voorhees, accompanied by a JNESO union representative to discuss the situation. The employer gave her an ultimatum to respond by Friday, she did and was fired by email.

This was Dawn Kulach's response to Virtua:

"After contemplation of our meeting yesterday morning (04/09/2020), With the hope that Virtua will distribute N95 masks for all employees hospital wide, and in agreement to adhering to Virtua policy regarding the use of clean gloves in every patient room and also by my intention to further protective measures by wearing clean gloves at my shared nursing station for increased protection to myself, my co-workers, and my patients during this time of the Corona Virus Pandemic and global uncertainty of transmission acquisition, I choose not to resign from my position as an RN at Virtua Voorhees. If you could, please send a written acknowledgement of my response to the above email."

JNESO Executive Director Douglas Placa stated: "It's obvious Virtua doesn't value the extraordinary steps employees like Dawn take to keep themselves healthy and at the bedside. At a time when frontline healthcare workers are at a premium, history will judge Virtua on how they care for their employees. Employees like Dawn should be revered not reprimanded."

Kulach is upset about this turn of events, but said she will keep on fighting. "I stood up for what I knew was right in the midst of this pandemic, especially with the uncertainty of knowing who does and who doesn't have COVID. I feel that the hospital systems need to provide an increased level of protection for their employees in all care areas," explained Kulach.

She added, "With the lowered recommendations coming from the CDC, I feel that Virtua has used the least amount of protection for us. I may be terminated by Virtua, but I plan to continue to fight for changes for my fellow health care workers in other ways. I pray every day for their health, safety, and wellbeing and I really do hope that Virtua will be making changes to live by their mission statement of 'be well,' 'get well,' and 'stay well,' even for their employees."



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“JNESO will continue to support our nurses and techs and will do whatever is necessary to keep them protected and safe during this pandemic,” said Placa. “More than 1,900 people in New Jersey have already lost their lives to COVID-19, and some of them have been nurses, doctors and other medical professionals. We can’t afford to lose anymore.”

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 www.jneso.org.

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