



## JNESO

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

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

### **JNESO NURSES & TECHS TO STAGE STRIKE & RALLY ST. MICHAEL'S MEDICAL CENTER - MONDAY MAY 23**

***Editor's Note: Interviews can be arranged with JNESO Exec. Director Doug Placa, Senior Negotiator Virginia Treacy, and President Elfrieda Johnson.***

North Brunswick (May 19, 2022) – Citing hospital management's unwillingness to negotiate in good faith, blatant disregard for the safety of nurses, technologists and patients and demanded "give backs" that defy 42-years of contract history with the hospital, JNESO Nurses and Techs are ready to strike on Monday, May 23, at St. Michaels Medical Center in Newark, N.J.

JNESO District Council 1 IUOE-AFL-CIO, the professional healthcare union that represents 350 nurses and techs at St. Michael's, a 358-bed hospital that serves the local Newark community, will start a job action at 7 a.m. and stage an outdoor public rally at 11 a.m. near the intersection of MLK Boulevard and Central Avenue.

"During negotiations, management has demonstrated a lack of willingness to respond to issues such as safety, staffing levels, health insurance and pensions," said Virginia Treacy, Senior Negotiator for JNESO. "They have demanded more than 20 different 'give backs' from us without offering anything to benefit our members."

Negotiations for a new 3-year contract started on March 28, the contract expired on May 4, and the 10-day strike notice was issued to management on May 11.

JNESO has filed several Unfair Labor Practices complaints against St. Michael's, for refusal to bargain in good faith, regressive bargaining, threatening bargaining unit members, and interfering and coercing nurses from a staffing agency by threatening to blacklist them if they refused to cross the picket line if a strike occurs, and for retaliating against a tech whose issue was raised at negotiations.

#### **Some of the main issues are:**

- Hospital refusal to review or address comprehensive health/safety practices and procedures plan provided by JNESO.
- Ongoing staff shortage including more than 50 open positions in critical areas such as ER, respiratory therapy and radiology.
- Removal of the Float Block guidelines currently in place to a "go anywhere we need you or go home" position putting patients at risk, particularly without proper training.
- Removal of the "steps" formula in place for 42 years to account for incremental raises by seniority regardless of wage packages that change contractually.
- Extremely limited access to specialty care for the employees. Offering NO out-of-network provisos for health care and limited access to specialty care facilities or physicians.

Mid-shift cancellations of some nurses and floating of nurses to any area of the hospital is also a top JNESO complaints. "They want to eliminate the float block language we bargained for years ago that



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keeps nurses in areas they are competent and trained to serve. But the problem is you can't just place any nurse anywhere, particularly in critical care areas," said Elfrieda Johnson, President of JNESO. "This isn't safe for the nurses or the patients, it is a disaster waiting to happen."

Johnson added, "JNESO fought hard alongside members of the community to save St. Michael's from closing in 2014, we have a vested interest in seeing it succeed, but not at the expense of the nurses and techs who care for the patients and community every day."

A number of politicians and other union supporters have been invited to participate in the rally and speak out to support JNESO's nurses and techs. The exact location is pending the permit approval.

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