



JNESO

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JNESO Calls for Hospitals to Take Action Improve Safety & Protect Healthcare Professionals

North Brunswick (December 2023) – The violent stabbing attack on two nurses and a medical student at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children’s Hospital today has sparked deep concern over the safety of health care workers at New Jersey hospitals.

“How does something like this happen in a pediatric intensive care unit where these dedicated health professionals are in the process of caring for the most vulnerable patients – who is not paying attention?” remarked Douglas Placa, Executive Director of [JNESO District Council 1, IUOE-AFL-CIO](#), which does not serve this hospital but does represent nurses and technicians at four acute care hospitals in New Jersey.

Placa explained that there is no standard for hospital safety in the state, so each facility creates their own plan, and he noted that several facilities have recently reduced their security teams to cut costs.

“This incident and recent increases in violence against health care workers are a huge wake-up call that something needs to be done now,” said Placa. “JNESO is sending a letter to all our facilities saying that we want them to immediately reevaluate all security measures to make sure they are stringent enough to keep health care workers – and their patients – safe!”

He added, “Shame, shame, shame on RWJ Barnabas Health Care System for failing to protect their doctors and nurses. Nurses, technicians, physicians, and staff are there to help patients, not to become patients in their own emergency rooms because their workplace isn’t safe.”

In May, the Governor signed the Health Care Heroes Violence Prevention Act, but this only addresses increased penalties for offenders and doesn’t include any measures to improve protections for health care workers.

“When the law was passed, we praised the sponsors, but also told them this bill didn’t go far enough,” said Placa. “Hospitals HAVE TO be held responsible for the safety of their own health care professionals, and we are going to continue to do whatever is necessary to put pressure on the facilities we serve to ensure the safety of our members.”

JNESO is one of the largest health care unions in New Jersey representing some 5,000 nurses and technicians at facilities across New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

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