

WASHINGTON STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION

St. Joseph Tacoma messages
June 2019

TALKING TO THE PUBLIC

We're getting media attention and soliciting community support. How we talk about our bargaining efforts at St. Joe's matters. That's why we've put together some guidance on what you can say to educate those who may ask about our issues – and get them on our side!

The messages below are suggestions for keeping the attention on the important patient safety/staffing issues we're fighting for and letting supporters know what they can do to help us win a fair contract that puts the safety of patients first.

NOTE: DON'T HAVE CONVERSATIONS AT WORK

Patients may ask you about our contract negotiations or offer words of support. It is important the we don't get into conversations with patients in the hospital about our strike preparation. Simply say, "Thank you for your support." Work time needs to be spent doing our jobs of caring for patients, not for discussing union business.

POINTS ABOUT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

- The WSNA-represented registered nurses at St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma have been in contract negotiations for 10 months and have held 14 negotiating sessions to date, the last four with a federal mediator.
- The Medical Center has failed to address our concerns about staffing and safe working conditions.
- Management doesn't respect our rights. The hospital has illegally threatened nurses with retaliation for filing grievances, ordered nurses not to submit complaints about inadequate staffing, hassled nurses for wearing union t-shirts, and unilaterally changed our working conditions during negotiations.
- We stand united in our fight for a fair contract that includes safe staffing to protect our patients and the needs of nurses.
- We have been holding union meetings to launch strike preparations. We have not yet set a strike authorization vote. That would be our next step.
- WSNA is ready to go back to the table to hear what management is willing to do to address the patient safety issues.
- We hope it doesn't come to a strike, but we are prepared to strike if we have to.
- The almost 1,200 nurses at St. Joe's have been disrespected, we have been told we have a bad attitude, and we are ready to fight.

POINTS ABOUT SAFE STAFFING AND PATIENT SAFETY

- Staffing remains the biggest issue.
- Nurses at St. Joe's feel stretched to the limit and have lost staff support with the elimination of health unit coordinators and reduction of CNAs and care assistants.
- Charge nurses are frequently pulled to do direct patient care, so there's no one to do their job of managing patient flow and assisting the nursing staff.

- WSNA's staffing proposals have asked management to commit to minimum staffing standards and to ensure established staffing plans are followed.
- We are demanding that St. Joseph implement substantive staffing reforms to provide for safe patient care and for the health and safety of nurses.
- The threats to patient safety are too critical to allow for further delay of critical staffing improvements.

POINTS ABOUT PATIENT SAFETY IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE

- If nurses strike at St. Joseph Medical Center, we will be standing up for our patients and safe patient care.
- If we do go on strike, we will be giving the hospital 10-day notice, as required by law, so they can plan for continued patient care.
- We would also establish an RN Emergency Standby Team Committee to solicit volunteers to work in the case of an emergency.
- We would never leave a patient without the critical, emergency care they need.
- The Nursing Code of Ethics states that "the nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care."
- By demanding that St. Joseph Medical Center address nursing staffing and patient safety issues, nurses are doing nothing less than making an ethical stand on behalf of the patients we serve.

FOR PHYSICIANS WHO WANT TO SUPPORT US

- We appreciate that you want to support nurses.
- We know you understand better than anyone how critical safe staffing is to caring for our patients.
- You can support us by emailing CHI Franciscan Health CEO Ketul J. Patel at ketulpatel@chifranciscan.org. Tell him:
 - I support registered nurses at St. Joseph Medical Center, who are fighting for a contract that allows them to safely care for patients in this hospital.
 - I share their concerns about the need for safe nurse staffing that allows them to care for our patients.
 - I need to be able to trust that my patients get the safe, high quality nursing care they need when they are in this hospital.
 - I urge CHI administration to bargain in good faith to meet the nurses' reasonable demands.

FOR FRIENDS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, OTHER COWORKERS, LABOR PARTNERS AND BUSINESSES WHO WANT TO SUPPORT US

- Nurses at St. Joe's are fighting for our patients and our community.
- We care about giving our friends, neighbors and community members safe, high quality care every time they are in the hospital.
- To do that, we need safe staffing.
- That's why we are demanding substantive staffing reforms from management at St. Joe's.
- Nurses are worried that increasing patient loads, cuts to support staff and short staffing of nurses could negatively impact patient care.
- That's why we are fighting so hard in our contract negotiations.
- We don't want to go on strike, but we're willing to do it if that's what it takes to get the safe staffing and safe patient care our community deserves at St. Joe's.

- You can support us by putting this sign in your car or your window.
- Take a photo and share it with us on social media!
<https://www.facebook.com/NursingStrongSJM/>
- Stay tuned