

91% of Butler Hospital Union Workforce Votes to Authorize Strike for Workplace Safety

"None of us want to strike but Care New England has ignored our safety for far too long."

PROVIDENCE, RI --91% of the entire workforce at Butler Hospital represented by SEIU 1199NE, or 99% of workers who participated, have voted to authorize a strike after management has refused to address workers' critical safety and economic concerns. Workers will announce the date for the possible strike in the near future and will continue trying to settle a fair contract to avert the strike. SEIU 1199 New England represents over 700 frontline staff at Butler Hospital including registered nurses, mental health workers, clerical, environmental service and dietary staff who began bargaining last month. Workers' current contracts expired March 31 and there are currently 116 open positions at the hospital.

"None of us want to strike but Care New England has ignored our safety for far too long. We are dealing with record numbers of assaults in the hospital and too many of us are afraid just to go to work. For the last month we have put forward specific proposals to improve workplace safety and the quality and consistency of care for our patients but management refuses to take our concerns seriously. Low wages are the key reason staffing is so short and turnover is so high. We have Butler staff who are struggling to feed their family and even living out of their cars - when people are worried about their basic needs it reduces the quality of the care and support we can provide. It is time Care New England addresses these problems head on so we can work on providing a safe, therapeutic environment for our patients."

Dan Camp, Behavioral Health Call Intake

Workers' strike vote comes only days after over 400 frontline staff held an informational picket outside Butler Hospital on April 21st demanding an end to workplace violence and poverty wages. In a recent survey, 95% of Butler caregivers say that Care New England is not doing enough to keep them safe at work and 60% say they have struggled to afford both food and housing costs.

MEDIA CONTACT

SEIU 1199NE Communications | comms@seiu1199ne.org

ABOUT SEIU 1199NE

District 1199 SEIU New England represents 29,000 health care and service workers in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Southeastern Massachusetts. In Rhode Island, 1199 SEIU

NE represents almost 5,000 members. 1199 SEIU NE is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) - a union of over 2 million members across the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. SEIU has been a national leader in pushing the growing Fight for \$15 and a Union movement.