

Over 1,200 Women & Infants staff hold unfair labor practice informational picket to demand safe staffing, respect and an end to law-breaking

They join nearly 3,000 Care New England workers bargaining new contracts over next six months.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- Over 1,200 Women & Infants frontline staff hit the picket line today in an unfair labor practice informational picket and rally to speak out against chronic staffing shortages, double shifts, lack of respect and failure by management to bargain in good faith. They were joined by SEIU members from the Butler Hospital and the VNA (Visiting Nurses Association), community supporters and elected officials to show their support in helping workers reach a fair contract settlement. In October, nearly 1,500 Women & Infants Hospital frontline staff, which represents 99.9% of workers who participated, voted yes to authorize today's ULP informational picket.

"Women & Infants has always been Rhode Island's premier hospital for mothers and babies but it feels like things have changed for the worse. As nurses, we are pulled in so many different directions and it is so hard to give the patient your full attention. We want to give the best care possible but our hands are tied when we don't have the staff we need. What's more, we have hospital staff who are barely making ends meet financially. It is hard to focus fully on providing quality care and services when you are distracted by not being able to pay the bills."

Kelli Price, a Registered Nurse in the Women's Progressive Care Unit that treats medical surgical and oncology patients

"I have worked at Women & Infants Hospital for over 35 years. Back when I started it had a real family community feel where all the managers would be ready to roll up their sleeves and help do the work. In fact, my first child was born prematurely and was in the NICU for 130 days and I had full confidence she was receiving excellent care. But sadly it has changed. Now it feels like management does not value the input of its frontline staff and the bargaining proposals they are putting forward are intended to move us backward when we should be moving people up."

Cheryl Frasier, a Registered Nurse in the Mother Baby Unit

Over 2,000 Women & Infants caregivers who are members of SEIU 1199 New England have been in bargaining with their employer to settle a new contract since the beginning of

October. In the last three bargaining sessions with the Union, Women & Infants's management offered proposals that will erode job standards, trample union rights and fail to solve the hospital's staffing crisis. Even more concerning, the Union has identified numerous categories of behavior by the Hospital that are both unlawful and unacceptable to the union members, including 1) refusal to bargain over several changes in the terms and conditions of employment of Union workers, 2) refusing to provide information requested for the purposes of formulating bargaining proposals and responding to the Hospital's proposals, and 3) intimidating, threatening, and in the most extreme cases - engaging in impermissible physical acts against union members and staff in retaliation for their testimony against the Hospital in a federal unfair labor practice trial before an Administrative Law Judge of the National Labor Relations Board. These clear and numerous violations of the National Labor Relations Act have prompted the Union to file several unfair labor practice charges against the Hospital.

"Women & Infants Hospital is a community of caregivers that work together to help our patients reach their goals. In order to meet the needs of our patients we need to have our needs met as well. We need management to recognize that we as the frontline staff are the hospital's greatest asset and we need the staffing, support and respect to allow us to provide the quality of care our patients deserve"

Cheryl Frasier, a Registered Nurse in the Mother Baby Unit

Along with frontline staff at Butler Hospital and the VNA (Visiting Nurses Association), nearly 3,000 Care New England employees will be engaged in contract bargaining over the next six months. Women & Infants union contract will expire at the end of November and caregivers at Butler Hospital and the VNA will begin bargaining shortly after.

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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.