

Over 1,800 or 90% of Entire Women & Infants Hospital Workforce Vote Yes to Authorize Unfair Labor Practice Strike on December 12

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- 90% of the entire workforce of frontline caregivers at Women & Infants Hospital or 99% of workers who participated, have voted to authorize an unfair labor practice strike on Thursday, December 12 after management has continued its refusal to bargain in good faith. SEIU 1199 New England represents over 2,000 frontline staff at Women & Infants including registered nurses, clerical, environmental service, dietary and technical workers who have been in bargaining since early October. Workers' current contract expires November 30.

"Striking as a nurse is never an easy decision, but our choosing to strike stems from a desire to advocate for better working conditions, patient safety, and fair treatment that ultimately benefits everyone, including our patients. By voting for an unfair labor practice strike, we are standing up for a healthier, safer work environment, which translates to better patient care and outcomes. Our goal is to highlight critical issues that need addressing for long-term improvements in healthcare including investing in and respecting the voices of dedicated staff which will ensure Women & Infants Hospital can uphold its high standards and provide the best care possible."

Elsie Lombardi, a Registered Nurse in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Care Center

Workers' strike vote comes only a few weeks after over 1,200 frontline staff held an unfair labor practice informational picket, which was the largest in local union history. Throughout bargaining, 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 multiple unfair labor practice charges against the hospital. What's more, frontline staff are deeply frustrated by the hospital's refusal to consider bargaining proposals that would address the staffing shortage by raising wages, preserve healthcare benefits, protect union rights and foster inclusivity by having the employer offer all policies and materials in multiple languages. In response, management has offered proposals in return that would greatly drive up healthcare costs, limit union activity and offer jobs to non-union workers. A recent union survey indicated that 68% of Women & Infants say they feel stressed about not being able to make ends meet as the cost of living continues to rise. In October, the median price of a single-family home in Rhode Island rose 11.5% to \$485,000 from the previous year. What's more, lack of competitive wages continues to hinder recruitment and retention of qualified staff, exacerbating a persistent staffing crisis that stretches across all departments and units.

"For me, a vote to strike is a vote to tell management we need change - and we need it now. I work in Diagnostic Imaging where staffing shortages have become the norm. Now with the new Med Surg unit open we will struggle to meet the needs of our patients which will cause burnout and elevate the risk of injuries and preventable harm to staff. I fear for the negative impact this could have on our patients and it needs to stop immediately. Once management finally listens to our concerns and works with us to find a staffing solution, we can move forward, settle a fair contract and get back to the work we love."

Doreen Engeian, who has been a Diagnostic Imaging Technologist at Women & Infants for 30 years

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.