

National Nurses United: Their Reckless Agenda

National Nurses United (NNU) has been aggressively pushing its national agenda to implement strict, rigid, costly and ineffective staffing ratios at hospitals across the country. The union's demands, language and tactics have been cookie cutter wherever they have been engaged in negotiations, irrespective of their target hospital's geography, mission or size. The main commonality in all these places: they are in contract negotiations with the NNU.

SIZE, LOCATION, MISSION? DOESN'T MATTER — NNU HAS THE SAME STRATEGY

The NNU has impugned quality, threatened or held strikes and demanded mandatory ratios at every type of hospital from teaching to community, West Coast to East Coast, small to large.

- ▶ **Community hospitals** (Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, MA, Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, MA, Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, PA)
- ▶ **Teaching hospitals** (Tufts Medical Center in Boston, University of Chicago Medical Center, Children's Hospital Oakland)
- ▶ **East Coast hospitals** (Washington Hospital Center, Tufts Medical Center, Eastern Maine Medical Center)
- ▶ **Midwest hospitals** (University of Chicago Medical Center, 14 Minnesota Hospitals, Range Regional Health Services hospital)
- ▶ **West Coast hospitals** (Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center, Children's Hospital Oakland)
- ▶ **Hospitals of all sizes:** from 142 beds to 926 beds
- ▶ **For-profit hospitals** (St. Vincent Hospital, Worcester, MA)
- ▶ **Nonprofit hospitals** (Tufts Medical Center, Berkshire Medical Center, Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, Children's Hospital Oakland, Range Regional Health Services hospital, 14 Minnesota Hospitals)

NNU coordinates strikes across the country for Nurses Week 2011

Range Regional Health Services hospital strike begins May 4

Children's Hospital Oakland strike begins May 5

Eastern Maine Medical Center strike begins May 5

Tufts Medical Center strike begins May 6

St. Vincent Hospital strike begins May 6

SAMPLING OF HOSPITALS IMPUGNED AND THREATENED WITH STRIKE BY NNU SINCE 2010:

Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield, MA:
600 nurses; 302-bed community hospital

Children's Hospital Oakland, Oakland, CA:
300 nurses; 190-bed pediatric medical center

Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Northampton, MA:
250 nurses; 142-bed acute care hospital

Eastern Maine Medical Center, Bangor, ME:
830 nurses; 411-bed medical center

Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA: 1,100 nurses; 400-bed hospital

Range Regional Health Services hospital, Hibbing, MN
150 nurses; 175-bed hospital

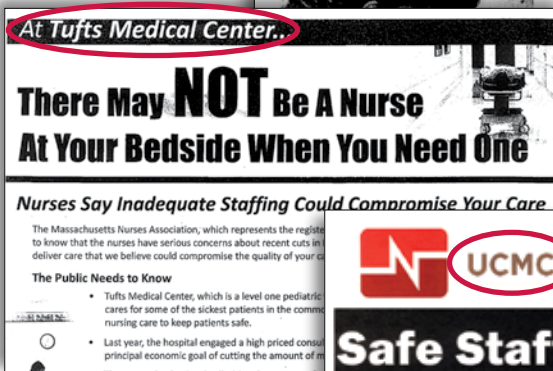
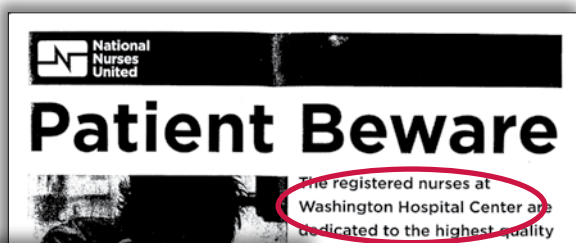
St. Vincent Hospital, Worcester, MA:
740 nurses; 348-bed acute care hospital

Tufts Medical Center, Boston, MA:
1,100 nurses; 415-bed academic medical center

University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL:
1,300 nurses; 570-bed medical center

Washington Hospital Center, Washington DC:
1,600 nurses; 926-bed hospital

Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, PA:
440 nurses; 392-bed community hospital



STRIKES AS A WEAPON

The NNU consistently and repeatedly threatens or executes strikes to try to push its agenda on hospitals. Strikes are counterproductive, destructive

tactics. The union claims to advocate for patient safety, yet this action clearly frightens patients and families.

“...Nurses United, a California-based union that took over representing (Washington) Hospital Center nurses last year, believes its tactic of multiple, short-term strikes is effective. 24-hour walkouts minimize economic pain to the workers while maximizing visibility and forcing the hospital to hire replacement workers and beef up security.”

NNU's harmful use of strikes was made perfectly clear when NNU spokesman Ken Zinn was quoted in the *Washington Business Journal* on April 11: “Zinn said Nurses United, a California-based union that took over representing (Washington) Hospital Center nurses last year,

believes its tactic of multiple, short-term strikes is effective. 24-hour walkouts minimize economic pain to the workers while maximizing visibility and forcing the hospital to hire replacement workers and beef up security.”

- ▶ NNU has given 10-day notices to:
 - Range Regional Health Services Hospital, beginning **May 4**
 - Eastern Maine Medical Center, beginning **May 5**
 - Children's Hospital Oakland, second strike beginning **May 5**
 - Tufts Medical Center, beginning **May 6**
 - St. Vincent Hospital, beginning **May 6**

It's likely no coincidence that the NNU announced strikes at Tufts Medical Center and St. Vincent Hospital on the same day and plans to hold those strikes on the same day. The union also announced strikes at Children's Hospital Oakland and Range Regional Health Services hospital on the same day (April 22) and announced strike authorization vote results for Tufts MC and UCMC on the same day (April 15) as well.

- ▶ NNU currently holds a strike authorization in their hands for University of Chicago Medical Center
- ▶ NNU announced plans to hold a second strike authorization vote at Washington Center Hospital
- ▶ NNU held a strike and threatened a second strike at 14 Minnesota hospitals in 2010
- ▶ Union documents found at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester in March 2011 indicated the union had been planning a five-hospital strike on the same day.

Chicago Tribune

April 15, 2011

U. of C. nurses authorize strike

Union nurses at University of Chicago Medical Center have voted to authorize a strike if their bargaining demands aren't met.

BOSTON Herald

April 15, 2011

Tufts nurses union authorizes strike

Patient quotas, overtime at issue

Nurses at Tufts Medical Center last night voted to authorize a strike in a dispute over nurse-to-patient staffing levels, setting the stage for a potential prolonged dispute after the hospital chief vowed to bring in replacement nurses.

SAME RHETORIC NO MATTER THE LOCAL ACCENT

Strikes as Weapons to Harm Hospital

“Nurses voted today to authorize a second one-day strike. This vote is an example of the nurses' commitment to patient safety at EMMC.”

— Vanessa Sylvester, president of the Maine State Nurses Association, **Eastern Maine Medical Center**, *Bangor Daily News*, April 12, 2011

“Last night, Tufts nurse Barbara Tiller told the Herald, ‘We're very excited about this.’”

— *Boston Herald* story on strike authorization, April 15, 2011

More to Come: New and Recent Threats and Staffing Demands

Cape Cod and Falmouth Hospital Nurses Launch Public Effort To Improve Staffing and Working Conditions, Call for Fair Contract

April 18, 2011 MNA/NNU Press Release:

HYANNIS — The registered nurses of Cape Cod and Falmouth Hospitals have begun a campaign to educate the public about the Cape Cod Health Care (CCHC) administration's refusal to provide adequate RN staffing, safe working conditions, and the resources needed to ensure patients receive quality patient care at the two facilities serving all of Cape Cod.

HealthAlliance nurses picket

April 18, 2011 Newspaper Coverage:

LEOMINSTER — A few hundred nurses stood outside HealthAlliance Hospital — Leominster Campus yesterday to take a stand against what they call corporate greed.

The union's last two-year contract expired in December, according to surgical nurse Natalie M. Pereira of Fitchburg, and the union is refusing to budge on some issues.

“This is about patient safety and affordable insurance for nurses,” said Ms. Pereira.

SAME TACTICS, DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

Rallies and Informational Pickets

Eastern Maine Medical Center 9/27/10
Again at Eastern Maine Medical Center 10/11/10
St. Vincent Hospital 2/14/11
Then one day later at Tufts Medical Center 2/15/11
Again at Tufts Medical Center 3/16/11
Daily informational pickets start at St. Vincent Hospital in March

News Conferences

Tufts Medical Center and St. Vincent Hospital – same day 1/19/11

“Flash Mobs”

St. Vincent Hospital Atrium – 2/7/11
Tufts Medical Center Atrium – 3/7/11

“Candlelight Vigils”

Tufts Medical Center – 2/15/11; members of Tufts Medical Center’s bargaining committee members ended negotiations early to attend a Candlelight Vigil at University of Chicago Medical Center on 3/23/11

Testifying at Hearings

Union airs complaints about St. Vincent at Massachusetts Department of Health meeting on 3/28/11
NNU creates hearings with Jobs of Justice Workers’ Rights Board regarding Tufts Medical Center on 4/13/11 and Eastern Maine Medical Center on 4/25/11.

“Scrubs Protests”

University of Chicago Medical Center nurses were asked to wear red-colored scrubs on Wednesdays. (Red is the color of the NNU.)
Washington Hospital Center nurses were asked to wear red-colored scrubs on Mondays.
Tufts Medical Center nurses were asked to wear black-colored scrubs on Wednesday indicating the “death of patient safety.”

Some union members have also taken an inappropriate tone with activities such as dressing as elves, singing and dancing at pickets, and saying they are “excited” about a strike authorization vote.

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
University of Chicago Medical Center Community Action

COMER
UCMC Mitchell
UCMC Parking Garage

Join the Nurses of Tufts Medical Center for a Candlelight Vigil for Safe Patient Care

When: Tuesday, Feb. 15 • 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Where: Outside the Main Entrance to Tufts Medical Center
800 Washington St. Boston, MA

The nurses of Tufts Medical Center are seeking community support for a Candlelight Vigil to call for desperately needed improvements in patient care conditions at this level one pediatric trauma and level two adult trauma center.

The nurses have serious concerns about recent cuts in RN staffing levels and other changes in how they deliver care that has resulted in nurses being forced to care for more patients at one time on nearly every unit. Those changes transformed this hospital from being one of the best staffed hospitals in Boston to the worst staffed hospital in the city. To compensate for chronic understaffing, TMC is using mandatory overtime, and is forcing nurses to “float” from one area of the hospital to another where they might not be competent to provide appropriate care

Show Your Unity by Wearing Red Every Wednesday!

National Nurses United The Voice for University of Chicago RNs
For More Information Contact: 301-451-4503 www.NationalNursesUnited.org UCMC@NationalNursesUnited.org

ensure that patients at Tufts Medical Center receive the safe care they deserve.

Registered Nurses Appeal to Tufts Medical Center community for Support in Our Effort to Ensure Safe Care for All of Our Patients

An Open Letter to the Tufts Medical Center Community:

We are writing to update you about our ongoing efforts to improve patient care and overall conditions at our hospital. Many of us have spent our entire nursing careers here. We have seen top administrators, managers, and supervisors come and go. Through all these changes we, along with all of our colleagues, go on caring for our patients and

We’re Taking a Stand for Our Patients
An Open Letter to the Washington Hospital Center Community

February 22, 2011
Dear Colleague:
We are writing to update you on our ongoing efforts to improve patient care and overall conditions at the hospital, and the status of collective bargaining between our union, National Nurses United (NNU), and management of Washington Hospital Center.

SAME RHETORIC NO MATTER THE LOCAL ACCENT

Staffing Ratios a “problem” at every hospital in negotiations with the NNU

“The biggest sticking point is staffing. Our answer is kind of simple. We want more nurses on the floors.”

– Vanessa Sylvester, president of the Maine State Nurses Association, **Eastern Maine Medical Center**, *Bangor Daily News*, November 2, 2010

“We have staffing problems in all UC hospitals, but there is no hospital in the UC system that has this gross and deliberate understaffing”

– Beth Keane, director of the Univ. of California division for the California Nurses Association, **UC Davis Medical Center**, *The Sacramento Bee*, November 6, 2009

“Staffing conditions at this hospital are deplorable. Nurses are caring for too many patients on a daily basis.”

– Marlena Pellegrino, RN and co-chairwoman of the St. Vincent Hospital bargaining unit, **St. Vincent Hospital**, *NECN.com*, Jan 19, 2011

“In this negotiation, we are trying to work with the hospital to come up with real solutions to the current staffing crisis, yet the hospital has made no substantive change and [refuses] to agree to adhere to the daily staffing plan we worked so hard to develop.”

– Paula Ryan, RN and chair of the MNA local bargaining unit, **Quincy Medical Center**, MNA Press Release, April 1, 2010

“You can’t provide quality patient care without adequate staffing. By refusing to establish safe staffing ratios that nurses can enforce, Kaiser administrators are allowing inconsistent and risky standards of care.”

– Carol Short, RN, **Kaiser Medical Center-LA**, NNU Media Advisory, February 28, 2011

“Providing safe RN staffing is a constant struggle here. We want the Hospital to change their practices so our patients can receive the safest and highest quality care possible.”

– Lisa Cargill, RN, co-chair of the bargaining unit, **UMass Memorial Medical Center**, MNA Press Release, October 13, 2010

“Our goal in these negotiations is to ensure safe staffing levels in ALL units at UCMC. Management has been unwilling to engage on our proposals regarding staffing.”

– Briggitt Manson, RN & Marianne Curia, RN, **University of Chicago Medical Center**, NNU Flyer, January 20, 2011

Impugning Hospitals Quality Without Any Evidence or Facts

“No nurse wants to strike. But nurses cannot continue to work under the current dangerous staffing conditions. Every day we wait, another patient is placed in jeopardy.”

– Barbara Tiller, RN and chair of the Massachusetts Nurses Association local bargaining unit, **Tufts Medical Center**, MNA Press Release, April 11, 2011

“No nurses wants (sic) to strike, but we are prepared to do so if Vanguard continues to refuse to make improvements in staffing levels – improvements that are needed to prevent a continued deterioration in the quality and safety of care at this hospital.”

– Marlena Pellegrino, RN and chair of the nurses local bargaining unit, **St. Vincent Hospital**, MNA Press Release, April 8, 2011

“Issues that are occurring from larger patient assignments include delays in nursing assessment, delayed administration of medications and tests, nurses missing significant changes in patients’ health status, poor patient outcomes, patients falling due to lack of assistance in getting up and moving and patients being left in soiled beds for hours at a time.”

– Barbara Tiller, RN & Chair of the bargaining committee, **Tufts Medical Center**, MNA Press Release, March 16, 2011

“Patients dying in transport across town because of frequent ER ambulance diversions at UCMC, longer waits for care in UCMC’s Emergency Department, and patients held as long as 48 hours or more before getting a hospital bed are among the shocking conditions facing South Side patients, the RNs charge.”

– **University of Chicago Medical Center**, NNU Media Advisory, March 22, 2011

Demand for Ratios, More Staffing

“(Jan) Rodolfo (of NNU) says nurses want to send a strong message that they’re serious about fighting for better staffing levels.”

– The Associated Press concerning **University of Chicago Medical Center** planned strike authorization vote

“We will continue to push the UC to do the moral and ethical thing, which is to staff adequately so the nurses can take care of their patients.”

– Geri Jenkins, RN & an official with the CAN, **University of California Hospital system**, UPI, June 19, 2010

“We’re agreeing to the mediation process to move the contract along and do whatever it takes to get the safe staffing ratios we need to care for our patients.”

– Marlena J. Pellegrino, a nurse and co-chairwoman of the St. Vincent Hospital bargaining unit, **St. Vincent Hospital**, *The Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, February 18, 2011

“Providing safe RN staffing is a constant struggle here. We want the hospital to change their practices so our patients can receive the safest and highest quality care possible.”

– Lisa Cargill, RN, co-chair of the bargaining unit, **UMass Memorial Medical Center**, MNA Press Release, October 13, 2010

“We have been trying since the end of August to get the hospital to talk to us about our staffing concerns, to improve staffing and thus improve patient care. This is not about money, this is about patient care and patient safety.”

– Judy Brown, president of the nurses union at EMMC, **Eastern Maine Medical Center**, *Bangor Daily News*, Nov. 21, 2010