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## **Hospital Nurses In Spokane and Richland Calling on Providence to Put Patient Safety Before Profits**

**Spokane & Richland, WA:** Nurses from hospitals hours apart are showing unity with joint, simultaneous informational pickets in Spokane and Richland this afternoon. Together, nurses from Kadlec and Sacred Heart are calling on Providence to put hospital nurse and patient safety before profits.

After months of negotiations, and little movement from Providence, the registered nurses at Sacred Heart and Kadlec are picketing outside their hospitals, taking their concerns about nurse staffing and safe patient care to the communities they serve.

"As a nurse, I put my patients' needs first, all day every day, but it doesn't feel like Providence cares about nurses or patients. They just care about the bottom line," said **Vanessa Douglas, an intensive care nurse at Kadlec.** "It seems like Providence is dragging their feet and trying to wear us down, but we're here to show them that we're not backing down. We're standing together with Sacred Heart nurses in Spokane who face many of the same Providence stall tactics and takeaway schemes."

"I have my patients' backs, no matter what, but at Sacred Heart I feel like I work for a big corporation that doesn't have my back," said **KT Raley-Jones, a cardiac intensive care nurse at Sacred Heart.** "For both Sacred Heart and Kadlec, this is about attracting and keeping the best nurses so we can keep our patients safe."

The nurses at both hospitals are fighting to protect the safety of the patients, and themselves. Issues at one, or both, Providence hospitals include:

- Making sure nurses aren't penalized for staying home while they themselves are sick or injured
- Ensuring nurses have time to take care of their own injured or ill family members
- Hiring and retaining enough nurses to cover patients' needs
- Jointly developing safety practices to prevent workplace assaults, especially in light of serious safety issues experienced at both Kadlec and Sacred Heart

## SACRED HEART BARGAINING BACKGROUND

May 9, 2019

### CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS BACKGROUND

WSNA-represented registered nurses at Sacred Heart have been in contract negotiations with Providence-Sacred Heart for six months and have held nine negotiating sessions to date.

There are approximately 1,900 registered nurses at Sacred Heart.

#### The key issues at the bargaining table

##### **Safe Nurse Staffing**

Safe staffing saves lives. WSNA has proposed that each unit in Sacred Heart Medical Center's facilities maintain staffing levels, including during meal and rest periods, that ensure safe patient care and the safety of the nurses. This includes safe staffing on the hospital floor, but also staffing that allows nurses to take rest and meal breaks. It includes adequate staffing so that nurses can take their paid time off. Providence-Sacred Heart management has resisted these common-sense commitments to nurse and patient safety.

- **Paid Time Off**

Providence-Sacred Heart wants to eliminate nurses' Extended Illness Time (EIT), an earned bank of time that covers illnesses for nurses and their families, and to cut paid time off benefits for many nurses. Nursing is a physically, emotionally and mentally taxing job, with nurses working 10- or even 12-hour shifts around the clock. They need and deserve time to spend with family and friends, to take a vacation and to recharge. They need to be able to stay home when they're sick.

- **Benefit Protection and Predictability**

Providence wants to be able reduce medical benefits and increase premiums during the life of the contract. They want to cut back dental and vision, too. The nurses are tired of takeaway after takeaway.

- **Wages that will attract and retain great nurses**

Some of the best nurses in the state provide care at Providence-Sacred Heart. We want to keep it that way. But it's hard to recruit and retain nurses at a facility the size of Sacred Heart without competitive wages and benefits. Providence-Sacred Heart's wage proposal will erode its ability to attract and retain the best nurses.

It's time for Providence-Sacred Heart to put nurse and patient safety before corporate profits.