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Inspira Health Nurses in bargaining for Safe Staffing, Safe Patient Care

For immediate release

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Vineland, NJ - "Keep Patients Safe" is the message Registered Nurses are bringing to the community on a travelling billboard to urge Inspira hospital administrators to agree to protect patient safety by setting safe staffing levels at each hospital.

All 1,300 Inspira nurses represented by the Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE) are in negotiations with Inspira for a contract that ensures safe working conditions; parity for all nurses across the health system; and safe staffing provisions to improve quality patient care. The "Keep Patients Safe at Inspira Hospitals" mobile billboard will tour Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland County this week.

"Every day, nurses make difficult decisions when they are caring for too many patients and we know having enough staff improves patient care and saves lives," said Rich Wear, RN,HPAE Local 5621 President. "Nurses have shared stories of unsafe staffing at bargaining and spoke passionately about the need for better staffing."

According to the union, nurses proposed nurse to patient ratios in their contracts, limits on the hospital's use of overtime to cover staffing, and equality for nurses across the system for fair pay and benefits.

"Across the health system, our top priority is to bargain provisions in our contract that will ensure safe patient care," said Dana Barrett, RN, HP AE Local 5131 President. "As we bargain for a contract

with standards for safe staffing, we continue our fight in Trenton to win safe staffing legislation to ensure every hospital in NJ has enough nurses to protect patient safety."

HPAE, NJ's largest healthcare union, is calling for passage of Senate bill, S.1280 and Assembly bill, A.750 to establish strong standards for nurse staffing levels, pointing to a decade of studies that link unsafe nursing staffing levels to increases in patient complications, infections and re-admissions, as well as increased injuries to nurses and staff. Negotiations are ongoing with the hospital administration before their current contracts expire on May 31, 2016.

HPAE is a healthcare union representing 12,000 Nurses and health care professionals throughout New Jersey and Southeastern Pennsylvania and is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. Nurses at Inspira hospitals in Vineland, Elmer and Bridgeton organized with the HPAE Local 5131 in 2006, and nurses at Woodbury hospital organized HPAE Local 5621 in 2014, ratifying their first contract last year.

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