

Health Professionals and  
Allied Employees AFT AFL-CIO

110 Kinderkamack Road  
Emerson, NJ 07630



November 1, 2022

Mr. Richard Lerner  
Chairmen, of Englewood Health Foundation Board of Trustees

Mr. Michael Gutter  
Englewood Health Foundation Board of Trustees

Mr. Ari Naim, PhD  
Englewood Health Foundation Board of Trustees  
350 Engle Street  
Englewood, New Jersey 07631

Dear Trustees:

We would like to take a moment to introduce ourselves.

I, Alice Barden, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN am the President of Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE) Local 5004, representing the staff nurses at Englewood Hospital. I have worked at Englewood Hospital for a little over 22 years. I presently work as a float nurse in Maternal Child Health Units. I co-chair the Mother/Baby Unit Based Team, and serve as a member of the MCH Council. On both of these committees, I serve as an agent for positive change in patient care and the work environment.

I, Michele McLaughlin, RN, MSN, CPAN am the Vice President of HPAE Local 5004. I have worked at Englewood Hospital for 44 years. I recently retired but remain working at Englewood as a Per Diem. I continue to work in PACU. As a care manager, I sat on multiple councils and committees. As a union leader I continue to sit on Steering Council. The Councilor Model is multi-layered that is inclusive of all levels of nurses in promoting shared-decision making in areas of standards development, performance improvement, material resources, research/evidence-based practice, and education.

We are writing to you in the hopes of eliciting your assistance to bring about a meeting with Englewood Hospital administrators. Specifically, human resources and nursing administration. Since December 2021, we have requested to meet with administration to discuss a contract reopener. We have repeated our request every month since, to no avail. Management refuses to meet with us to discuss much needed strategies for recruiting and retaining quality nursing staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the nursing health care crisis in many ways including but not limited to forcing nurses to leave the profession because of the physical and emotional toll it placed on nurses. HPAE recognizes the growing demand for nurses and the movement of nurses away from the bedside. We are also quite aware of the competitiveness of retaining and hiring nurses within our area. We have witnessed this nursing exodus and experience the impact of it every day that we work. This is one of the reasons we have been asking hospital management to meet with us to have a realistic and productive conversation regarding the state of nursing at Englewood Hospital and how we collaborate to turn things around.

*Let us look at some facts:*

#### EHMC Turnover and Travel/Agency Cost Metrics

- EHMC turnover cost year 2021 \$6,664,800.
- EHMC turnover cost 2022 \$2,807,700.\*
- EHMC travel/agency cost \$8,407,360.\*\*
- **TOTAL COST \$17,879,860**

\*data from 1/22 to 4/22

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\*\*EHMC on average employees 40 traveler/agency nurses per year. Figure reflects a 2-year cost.

These costs can be diminished greatly if EHMC were to enter into discussions with HPAE to address recruitment and retention strategies. In addition, EHMC needs to focus on strategies to enhance the institutional culture, which reflects the value and commitment the institution has towards not only nurses but all hospital staff. There is tremendous competition for patient volume within our area hospitals. HPAE wants to work collaboratively with EHMC management to make EHMC the hospital of choice for the community and for nurses.

HPAE intends to propose several initiatives with the goals of engaging nursing staff, keeping valuable talent, and attracting more of the same. It is imperative that both HPAE and EHMC agree to trust that honest, constructive conversations with mutual values as a goal will occur. We are asking your assistance to bring about this meeting.

Thank you,

Alice Barden, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN, President HPAE Local 5004  
Michele McLaughlin, RN, MSN, CPAN, Vice-President HPAE Local 5004