

“Leadership from the Rochester Union of Nurses and Allied Professionals (RUNAP) publicly communicated that they have conducted a second strike authorization vote and that a sufficient number of nurses have voted to authorize a strike.

We are extremely disappointed that RUNAP has decided to conduct a second strike authorization vote and are planning to strike again, particularly given the movement Rochester General Hospital (RGH) has made at the bargaining table to address concerns the union has raised related to wages, staffing, benefits and other topics still open for negotiations.

RUNAP’s two-day strike in August cost RGH over \$6 million to secure the expert, safe patient care needed to keep the hospital’s operations running with minimal interruption. That’s money we can no longer invest back into RGH through pay and benefits, new technologies or additional programs to serve the community. A second strike would cost RGH even more as the union has said it plans to strike for five days. We would again have to secure temporary replacement nurses – and this time for an even longer period. **RGH does not want another strike and we believe nothing we have proposed or haven’t proposed in our negotiations with RUNAP warrants a second strike.**

It’s important to note RGH has moved significantly on a number of important bargaining issues, including the key issue of wages, where we have made a total of six proposals, the latest of which would increase RUNAP-represented nurse wages by 20% over four years. In addition, we have moved substantially on the important issue of staffing, in which we have agreed to include staffing concepts in the contract, with input on staffing coming from a staffing committee that will include RUNAP members. RUNAP has not agreed to either of these proposals and a number of important issues remain to be negotiated at the bargaining table. However, that is no reason to strike. We are actively negotiating and showing up at each session ready to make progress towards an agreement.

Now that a strike authorization vote has passed, by law, the union can only strike after giving RGH 10 calendar days’ notice. RUNAP has informed us their five-day strike will be from 7AM on October 23 – 7AM on October 28 . We continue to hope a strike does not take place but, if it does, RGH is fully prepared and equipped to continue serving our patients and the community. The care, safety and comfort of our patients will continue to be our top priority.

Despite the strike authorization vote, RGH remains committed to bargaining in good faith. Currently, we have a bargaining session scheduled for next week and we are committed to scheduling additional bargaining dates with the union.

It's important to remember that it is very common for labor negotiations over any collective bargaining agreement, and especially a first contract, to take a significant amount of time. According to a 2022 analysis of data by Bloomberg Law, it can take an average of 465 days, or 15 months, for a union and an employer to reach and ratify a first labor contract. In our case, we have been bargaining for approximately 12 months.

Our nurses are exceptional professionals who put patient care first and are essential to our ability to provide the highest quality care to our community. They proved that during the first strike when, on the first day, 48% of RUNAP-represented nurses who were scheduled to work the 7AM – 7PM shift showed up to care for their patients and 50% did during the same shift on the second day. This also demonstrated that, despite the union's claims, support for the strike seemed to be very limited.

We are grateful to our nurses for their ongoing commitment to patients and to RGH, and we hope they will not be asked or compelled to again walk out on the patients and families who depend on them to provide high-quality, compassionate care.”