



Minnesota Nurses Association Opening Statement to Hospitals

2019 Contract Negotiations

As Registered Nurses, our industry puts us on the front line to keep patients safe, and we put patient safety and the health of our patients first in every act of care. Every day, we are put in the position of being the first member of the healthcare team to recognize changes in our patients' conditions. As a profession, it is our responsibility to show compassion and help alleviate our patients fears and anxiety by maintaining a calm presence. We answer our patients' questions and address their concerns. We empower patients to make choices and decisions so that they can maintain a sense of control over their health conditions. We treat our patients with dignity and respect and are required to exhibit an awareness of age, gender, racial, cultural and religious differences. We must attempt to understand our patients' experiences in order to communicate therapeutically with our patients. And it is nurses, above all members of the healthcare team, that must have the time and resources to treat our patients as an individual, rather than as a diagnosis or a number.

Think back to your first experience in a hospital. No matter the years that separate us here in this room, our experiences are vastly different than what our patients experience today or what they will experience tomorrow. In an article titled, "Health Care in the United States: An Evolving System," author Thomas P. Conklin wrote: "Today's health care system is not only complex, it is significantly different from 'what it used to be'... The American health care system has not only undergone drastic changes within two generations but also continues to evolve."

As we begin the process of negotiating a successor agreement, our set of proposals is designed to do one thing: Raise the standard and move our contract forward. Healthcare is continually changing, and we believe that our contract should reflect the reality of our industry. We believe the reform that we advocate for today will protect patients in our care for the future.

Our contract has remained static for nearly a decade while the healthcare landscape has continued to evolve. These fast-paced changes have added additional requirements to the role of the registered nurse and complexity to our ability to provide care. We believe that our proposals call on Children's to acknowledge our role within the healthcare industry and provide a fair contract that raises nurses up. We believe our proposals call on Children's to recognize the value of attracting and retaining the best and the brightest nurses, so that we can continue Minnesota's reputation of providing some of the best healthcare in the country.

Our nurses across the metro are united in working together to achieve our goals through proposals that reinvest in nursing care and raise the standards in our contract, which is why over an overwhelming majority of nurses signed this petition.

With nearly 13,000 registered nurses working at 13 different hospitals across the metro, we play a key role in setting the example for healthcare across the country—we, as nurses, put the care in healthcare.