

Nurses to rally over contracts

Contract talks between Twin Cities hospitals and their nurses have reached a standstill, prompting the nursing union on Thursday to announce plans for informational picketing over the next two weeks.

The Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) said it has reached agreements with hospital negotiators on some key individual issues, but has yet to reach complete contract proposals with the Allina, Children's, Fairview and HealthEast systems or with North Memorial Health Hospital in Robbinsdale or Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park.

"We can't take the [tentative agreements] to a vote until we have an entire set contract of agreements," said MNA spokesman Rick Fuentes. The current contracts expire May 31.

The first scheduled picket will take place during the day on May 22 outside Children's Minneapolis hospital. The last will be May 29 outside Methodist.

The contract talks are the first since 2016, when Allina Health nurses went on two strikes for a combined 44 days over a dispute about health insurance.

Negotiations this year started in late March, but have ended this week without any finished agreements or additional talks scheduled.

The union has sought contract language supporting nurses if they are victims of workplace violence or patient assaults. Interim agreements on that topic have been reached with Methodist, Fairview and HealthEast. Negotiations over pay increases in some cases just started this week.

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