



Nurse leaders Donnet Smith, RN; Tara Christopher, RN; and Dawn Minerve, RN



By Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN
NYSNA President



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Labor unity can blunt these attacks

Think of your worst day ever: no staff, equipment, training or support.

Then consider that you face many more days like that, worsening over time.

Ponder dangerous conditions—with no safe avenues to demand your own health and safety needs.

Reflect upon a work situation where you're subjected to disrespect, bullying and violations, with no recourse to defend your rights.

Imagine living in poverty, even as you work as a professional, with little hope for improvement.

Then see these dynamics in every context where people work.

That is the world without unions.

Free ride a dead-end

Right-wing sectors of billionaires, corporations and their political allies aim to return to that world without unions. The increase of "Right to Work" states (a clever misnomer) to 26 and the specter of *Friedrichs v. CTA*—the historic Supreme Court case which would make it illegal for public workers to negotiate a Union Agency Shop—are leading us in that direction. Disguised as "individual rights," the American public is being manipulated yet again.

The "Open Shop" in these 26 states allows workers, in which a majority have elected a union, to get a free ride: they get all benefits, salaries, healthcare, retirement, and representation but don't have

"At the core, labor unions are working men and women, unified as one force. Despite any personal differences that may exist between us, we have banded together to protect and improve the lives of workers. We rise up together for the greater good. We defend one another like family."

SUE CARNEY, "We're Not a Fee-for-Service Organization",
The American Postal Worker, 2014

to pay one penny of union dues.

The consequences are obvious: in southern states, historically "open shop," and low "union density" is the norm, resulting in lower salaries, few benefits and worse working conditions.

Friedrichs sidelined...for now

With the unexpected death of Justice Scalia of the Supreme Court, there's now likely a 4-4 split vote; precedent indicates that the lower court ruling against *Friedrichs* would stand—for now. If President Obama nominates a new justice, the Senate needs to approve.

We all need to be more knowledgeable about legislation, case law, the intricate economic relationships between corporations and politicians and our own history. School textbooks often omit or gloss over the struggles of the people who built this nation: slaves, exploited workers, family farmers

and migrant laborers, women, people of color and immigrants—most of them poor and many of whom were subjected to squalid living conditions and discrimination. Black History Month (see page 3), Women's History Month, Nurses Week and a variety of other holidays and celebrations pay tribute to the contributions of people whose legacies have been denied.

Historically, the downtrodden of our country had one hope: that their children would inherit a better world and thrive in a vibrant nation. That hope hinges on unions with active memberships. At stake is stability in the form of guaranteed work, health benefits, a dignified retirement, good wages and affordable housing.

No voting from fear

NYSNA, through tireless efforts of dedicated leaders, active members and staff, is taking a lead in fighting for workers and communities. Our success depends upon the work that we do as a collective. Sometimes we win, sometimes we don't—but fight we must. Without your active participation that work would be impossible. Bear in mind that the "Open Shop" is designed to paralyze us.

In this election year, it's best to be aware that we often vote based on emotion rather than intellect, out of fear rather than hope. We wish to provide you with accurate information regarding candidates' views and practice surrounding issues seen as important to our members and patients. (See pages 7-10.)

Scientists have said that the human brain has infinite potential.

Let's tap that potential and see where we can go.



From the 1979 film, *Norma Rae*

NYSNA nurses reflect on Black History Month

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH, a time to acknowledge the incredible work of black scholars, writers, artists, scientists, civil rights activists, elected leaders, and, of course, nurses. It is also a time to reflect on our country's painful history of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and on current systems of racism, including disparities in healthcare.

A new generation of NYSNA nurses is taking the lead in our union's fight for a better future for our patients and our families. We asked some of our black nurse leaders to share their thoughts on Black History Month.



Donnet Smith, RN
Montefiore Medical Center
Home Health Agency

“As a home care nurse, part of my job is building trust. I see a lot of older black men who won't do medical exams—some of them are in their 80s and they still remember the Tuskegee syphilis experiments—so they don't trust the healthcare system.

In Jamaica, where I grew up, the majority of the country is black, so the differences we had there were of income and status, not race. When I came here, I learned about race relations and all of the struggles that African Americans had to face to get this country to where it is today.

Black civil rights leaders in this country, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. opened the door for a lot of other movements, like the gay rights movement. It's important for everyone to learn from this history.”

Editor's note: *The Tuskegee experiments were government-funded experiments on black men that lasted for more than 40 years wherein patients were intentionally denied treatment for syphilis so that researchers could study the effects of the disease. The experiments finally ended in 1972. President Bill Clinton officially apologized for the unethical and racist experiments in 1997.*



Dawn Minerve, RN
New York Presbyterian

“Black history is American history—it's a part of everything that has happened in this country from its inception, since the moment they started importing slaves for labor.

Because of the media, we're all aware of the shootings of young black men. I never knew so much worry before I had my son, who is 11. I look at him and I see this is my child, this is my baby. But I know someone could look at him and think that he's in the wrong just because he is black. He doesn't have to be doing anything wrong for him to lose his life and for someone to justify it. And that is terrifying for a mother.

If you see the humanness in yourself and in others, it's hard to harm them. It's only when you separate yourself and start saying, 'he's not like me, his life doesn't have as much value as mine,' that those things start to happen. It doesn't matter your economic situation, your sexual orientation, your ethnicity, we are all the same. We are all humans.”



Tara Christopher, RN
Woodhull Medical Center

“Black history month is an opportunity for us to reflect on the contributions African Americans have made to this country, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, and now Barack Obama. I think having a black president has made a difference because now black people my age, we feel like we can conquer anything. But there are still disparities that we have to address.

In many black communities, there aren't options for healthy food and there isn't enough access to preventative healthcare. Often a person's first visit to the hospital is when they are so sick they have to go to the Emergency Room.

I was two when I was diagnosed with asthma. I became close with the nurses who treated me and they changed my life. I became a nurse so that I could help other people just like I was helped. I know that asthma often comes from where we live. In lower-income communities like the one in which I grew up, there are higher rates of pollution and other triggers for asthma.”



Ykeeta Henderson Wilson, RN
Erie County Medical Center

“My father actually marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and I grew up hearing stories from the civil rights movement. We've come a long way as a country, but sometimes it's disappointing to see how far we still have to go.

I always tell my kids to take advantage of all of the rights that our ancestors fought for because not too long ago we didn't have the right to vote, the right to an education, or the right to walk into any grocery store.

I try to set an example for my children. When my daughter was in high school I went back to school to study nursing. In nursing school, I did not have a single black professor. Now, I'm enrolled in a master's program because I want to teach nursing.”

Paid Leave Act: Win-win for all

By Jill Furillo, RN, NYSNA
Executive Director



This month NYSNA joined New York State legislators, fellow labor leaders, Governor Cuomo, and Vice President Joe Biden at the New York City rally for paid family leave. Working families need paid time off so that new parents can care for their children and so that loved ones can stay home with sick family members without facing loss of income.

That's why paid family leave is a key element of the Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice and why our union actively supports The New York State Paid Family Leave Act (A. 3870 / S. 3004). The legislation, currently before both the New York State Assembly and Senate, will provide up to 12 weeks of paid family leave, and guarantee much-needed financial security to working families. Workers will receive two thirds of their average weekly salary while on leave up to a maximum benefit level, which will be raised each year for the next four years.

U.S. lags world

Nurses know that paid family leave is essential to the health of our patients and our communities. Whether it is to bond with a new child or care for an ill family member, workers need paid time off to support the health of their families. The legislation would also cover workers who need time off to address issues arising from a family member's military service, and would be available to care for a spouse, domestic partner, parent, parent of a spouse or partner, grandparent, sibling, grandchild, or child.

The United States is the only industrialized country in the world that provides no guaranteed paid family leave. We're lagging behind the 185 other countries that have already instituted paid leave programs. Our current leave-time system, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), provides only unpaid time off. But nearly 80 percent of new mothers and 50 percent of all workers are not even covered by the Act.



Governor Andrew Cuomo in West Haverstraw, NY, February 22, campaigning for passage of paid family leave in the state.

Most low-wage workers are already struggling to cover basic expenses and cannot afford the loss of income that would result from taking unpaid leave. One recent analysis found that 77 percent of workers who were eligible for FMLA did not take it for financial reasons, although nearly all of them said that they would have taken leave if some wage replacement had been available.

More than half of all low-wage working women have less than \$500 in savings. Yet our nation's current leave-time policies disproportionately shortchange women, who most often act as the primary caregivers in families with a new child or an ill or aging loved one. According to the Family Wealth Advisors Council, working women in their 40s and 50s spend at least 20 hours a week caring for aging family members. *The New York Times* recently reported that women spend an average of four hours a day on unpaid work, much of it providing care for family members, while men spend about 2.5 hours. This gender imbalance compounds the high levels of poverty that women face in America.

Paid family leave can help to improve gender disparities by protecting women from loss of income and by encouraging men to take leave to care for loved ones. Following the implementation of statewide paid family leave in California, the likelihood of men taking family leave following a child's birth more than doubled, from 35 percent to 76 percent.

California isn't alone in seeing advances from implementing paid family leave. New Jersey and Rhode Island have successfully enacted similar programs that have benefitted families in those states.

Business support

Businesses have come out in support of paid family leave. The American Sustainable Business Council's New York members recently decided to support the bill. That's because paid leave actually saves businesses money. California's program is estimated to have saved employers \$89 million a year in reduced turnover costs.

Employer's payroll costs will not be impacted by the Paid Family Leave Act because the benefit will be financed solely through employee payroll deductions. It also will not add any new administrative requirements on businesses because it will become part of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program that has been in place in New York since 1950.

Businesses that already provide paid family leave will see some of their costs offset, and small business will be more competitive because all workers will receive paid family leave regardless of the size of their company.

Paid family leave is good for families and it's good for our economy. NYSNA nurses are joining New York State Federation of Labor-AFL-CIO and Governor Cuomo in calling on New York State legislators to stand with working families and to pass The New York State Paid Family Leave Act.



New Yorkers rally for paid family leave.



A young supporter of the Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice

Legislative briefing on safe staffing packs room

Scores of elected officials attended a legislative briefing on safe staffing in Albany on February 9 to hear experts, patients, and caregivers explain how nurse-to-patient staffing ratios save lives. The briefing was hosted by the newly-formed Campaign for Patient Safety, launched by a coalition dedicated to the passage of the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act (S.782/A.8580-A). Union nurses represented by NYSNA, Communications Workers of America and the Public Employees Federation along with labor allies and patient and community advocacy organizations form the coalition. The legislative briefing, moderated by New York State Assembly Members Richard Gottfried and Aileen Gunther, was the campaign's first major event.

Nearly 100 New York State Senators, Assembly Members, and their staff packed the room to hear a panel discussion, pose questions, and learn about safe staffing from experts. The legislative briefing was followed by a press conference to announce the formation of the Campaign for Patient Safety, which received news coverage from the Associated Press, Politico, and several TV news outlets.

Assemblywoman Gunther, who represents communities in Orange County and is also an RN, is spearheading the effort inside the leg-

islature, where there is bipartisan support with 86 Assembly sponsors and 26 Senate sponsors.

"It is a proven fact that patient outcomes are better when there are enough nurses at the bedside of their patients at hospitals across New York," said Assemblywoman Gunther. "I am proud to be the sponsor of the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act because safe nurse-to-patient ratios save lives and New Yorkers deserve the best care possible."

Strong public support

Marion Enright, RN and LBU President at Nathan Littauer Hospital, where nurses struck in early January over issues that included staffing, addressed legislators at the briefing, "We're running this campaign because there is a staffing crisis in New York's hospitals. There's a shortage of nurses that must be addressed if we want to ensure that patients are well taken care of and have good outcomes."

A November 2015 poll by the Mellman Group found a staggering 85% of New Yorkers support setting a maximum number of patients a nurse can care for at one time, and 67% of those polled said there are not enough nurses in New York hospitals. With strong public support for safer staffing, it's time to go beyond debate and make it the law.



Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, RN, addresses the press at the February 9 launch of the New York Campaign for Patient Safety.

"There is evidence that inadequate staffing disproportionately affects communities of color. When life and death decisions are left to executives without oversight, our most vulnerable populations will suffer," said Becca Telzak, Director of Health Programs at the community organization, Make the Road New York. Municipalities across the state have been passing resolutions calling on legislators to pass the bill. Erie, Schenectady and Ulster Counties have passed resolutions, as have the City of Buffalo and numerous towns.

Facts are clear

The hospital industry's arguments that the regulations are unnecessary and costly are the same as those that were put forth by their counterparts in California prior to its passage of minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in 2004—arguments that have been disproven by experience, said DeAnn McEwen, RN, former president, California Nurses Association, who attended the legislative briefing. A 2010 study led by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania compared data from hospitals in California, Pennsylvania and New Jersey and found that lower staffing ratios were associated with fewer patient deaths.

NYSNA Treasurer Pat Kane, RN, said, "It is essential to pass the safe staffing bill for patients, nurses, and families across New York. Just look at the facts: patients heal faster, go home sooner, and are less likely to be readmitted—all while saving hospitals money. It's just common sense, and that's why we are working so hard to get the bill approved."



DeAnn McEwen, RN, former President, California Nurses Association, Marva Wade, RN, NYSNA's First Vice President, and Pat Kane, RN, NYSNA Treasurer in Albany, February 9

Campaign for Patient Safety Members

New York State Nurses Association

New York State AFL-CIO

Communication Workers of America, District 1

Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare

Working Families Party

Public Employees Federation

Citizen Action of New York

Make the Road NY

New York Statewide Senior Action Council

New York State Alliance for Retired Americans

New York Communities for Change

Coalition for Economic Justice

Metro New York Healthcare for All

NYSNA endorses safe staffing hero Marc Panepinto

Marc Panepinto has been a tremendous advocate for NYSNA nurses and our patients in the New York State Senate and beyond. Up for reelection in the 60th District, Panepinto is a sponsor of the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act. Last October, he attended the NYSNA State Convention in Saratoga Springs to personally thank members for our hard work and commitment to patient care. More recently, he drove hundreds of miles from his district in Buffalo to stand with Nathan Littauer RNs during their January strike.

Major arb award for 300 ECMC nurses

In a victory for NYSNA members, Erie County Medical Center included an extra \$43,000 in its January payroll. Payments to individual nurses ranged from \$56 to \$467.

A little more than a year earlier, an arbitrator had ordered the hospital to stop short-changing nurses for holiday pay and compensate them for owed overtime. After management dragged its feet with compliance, the ECMC NYSNA Executive Committee pushed for resolution.

"This was a substantial award, and we weren't going to wait any longer. Every nurse who had worked a 12-hour shift over a holiday was owed money, and we demanded closure," said Mark Medakovich, RN and NYSNA Executive Committee member.



Beth Moses, RN, ECMC

The arbitration grew out of a NYSNA class action grievance. "This was the second time we brought this issue to grievance,"

said NYSNA member Beth Moses, RN. "In 2009, we noticed that new payroll software was short-changing holiday overtime pay."

Déjà vu

The issue was resolved the first time around after NYSNA members filed a grievance, but when ECMC upgraded its payroll software in 2012, Ms. Moses noticed the same thing happening again—nurses working a 12-hour shift on a holiday were not getting paid all the overtime due. At first management refused to acknowledge the problem, but NYSNA nurses won in arbitration and continued to push until RNs received the pay they were owed.

Union solidarity at Erie County Medical Center

Heather Scott, an RN in ECMC's Inpatient Behavior Health Unit, is excited about the changes she's seeing in her union. "When I started working here four years ago, nurses weren't as active in our union, but there's been a big transformation over the past year. The word is out and ECMC nurses are getting involved." Ms. Scott herself recently volunteered to be a Safe Staffing Captain.

She credits a new ECMC NYSNA Executive Committee for providing the leadership that's sparking excitement and empowering the hospital's 1,000 nurses. "One of the first changes I noticed was the NYSNA table outside payroll distribution. The Committee is there every time, handing out leaflets and inviting members to NYSNA events like Inter-regionals and even meetings outside of Buffalo."

Action plan in motion

Mark Medakovich, RN and a member of the ECMC NYSNA Executive Committee, sees the seeds of a membership action plan beginning to sprout. "For the past year-and-a-half, we've made a concerted effort to build nurse power by involving more of our colleagues in our union." Nurses plan to rev up member engagement by holding

delegate elections in all units, collecting member emails to facilitate communication, and increasing the participation of ECMC RNs in statewide NYSNA events like lobby days and conventions.

Making connections

Nurse leaders dedicated the month of February to distributing the newly printed NYSNA-ECMC contract. Kevin Donovan, RN and ECMC Vice LBU President, explained why the Committee made a commitment to hand deliver the contract to every member. "The personal connection is important. It lets the nurses know that we are all in this together as NYSNA members."

The Committee passed out hundreds of contracts during a two-day blitz early in the month. Fifty nurses volunteered to be Safe Staffing Captains. Additional contract distribution days were held later in the month, and will continue until nurse leaders have spoken to each of their colleagues face-to-face.

Increased member engagement has already led to a victory for safe staffing. ECMC's newly-formed civic action team mobilized alongside caregivers from the Communications Workers of America and successfully lobbied the Buffalo Common



Sarah Ott and Heather Scott, RNs at ECMC

Council to pass a resolution in support of safe staffing. This was just the first big action of many more to come, as the civic action team continues to organize with support from Buffalo's political, labor and community groups.

"There's a new level of energy and excitement about our union," said Ms. Scott. "And that's really important because ECMC has a lot of young nurses who are learning to be stronger advocates for themselves and their patients. That's what NYSNA is all about."

NYSNA Votes

2016 Presidential Primary

The 2016 presidential primary election will take place in New York State on **Tuesday, April 19**.

It's not too late to register to vote, or to update your address or party affiliation. Voter registration forms must be postmarked no later than March 25 and received by no later than March 30. To obtain a voter registration form, go to your local post office or to <http://www.elections.ny.gov/>.

At the time this went to press, there were two Democratic and six Republican candidates running in the primaries to be their party's nominee for President. With delegates awarded from the first few states, both parties' primary fights are up in the air. They may be long, hard-fought slogs right down to the conventions this summer, when the Republicans will converge on Cleveland (July 18-21) and the Democrats on Philadelphia (July 25-28).

A lot hangs in the balance for working people. The recent death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia reminds us how critical to the fights for healthcare, workers' rights, and economic security a President's legal and regulatory appointments can be. All around the country, there are campaigns around wages, family leave, child-care, elder care, healthcare, and education that could well receive federal action in the coming years. The status of immigrants, matters of war and peace, and the health of our planet all depend on political questions: who is in power, and what is their agenda?

NYSNA will help keep our members informed about this critical election, here in their own words is a brief outline of the policies of each candidate. When New York heads to the polls on April 19, NYSNA members will, as always, carry our patients and communities with us when we pull the lever.

Democratic Primary Candidates



Senator Bernie Sanders (I – VT)

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES **INCOME INEQUALITY**

Jobs program: Sanders' approach is in the tradition of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt: striving to provide every American with a job at a living wage through government action and assistance to small businesses. His program calls for raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans, taxing Wall Street speculative trading and large inheritances, closing loopholes, and devoting revenue foremost to job creation. Sanders will invest \$1 trillion in new revenue to hire 13 million Americans to rebuild infrastructure and \$5.5 billion to create 1 million jobs for disadvantaged youth. Sanders would seek to reverse trade

policies like NAFTA, which led to the closing of thousands of U.S. factories and millions of jobs lost. Sanders opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership for similar reasons.

Sanders would also protect quality jobs by strengthening the right to organize unions through the Employee Free Choice Act.

Wages: Sanders recently introduced a bill in the Senate to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$15. "I think if you work 40 hours a week, you have a right not to live in poverty," he says. On his website, he writes, "The issue of wealth and income inequality is the great moral issue of our time, it is the great

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Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES **INCOME INEQUALITY**

Jobs program: Clinton relies on tax incentives for business to achieve job growth, a "market" approach. For example, she proposes "a new \$1,500 apprenticeship tax credit" for business to train and hire. She also has called for "reviving the New Markets Tax Credit and Empowerment Zones to create greater incentives to invest in poor and remote areas" and supports "a new plan to reform capital gains taxes to reward longer-term investments that create jobs." Clinton supports only a partial government investment in jobs, calling for "an infrastructure bank that can channel more public and private funds

to finance airports, railways, roads, bridges and ports."

Clinton supported the Trans-Pacific Partnership as Secretary of State which was opposed by the labor movement due to the number of jobs that would be lost. Now, as a candidate she opposes it.

Wages: Clinton wants to raise the federal minimum wage to \$12 an hour from the current \$7.25 which would lag behind the current rate of inflation and why most New York elected Democrats support \$15 an hour. She also will "encourage other communities to go even higher."

Paid Family Leave: Clinton backs a

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Sanders, cont.

economic issue of our time, and it is the great political issue of our time.”

Paid Family Leave: Sanders supports 12 weeks of paid family leave. “The United States is the only developed nation in the world without guaranteed, paid parental leave. A democratic, civilized society should guarantee these benefits for the working families and middle class of our country,” he says on his website.

Wall Street: Sanders believes that a small group of billionaires, either financiers or others with close ties to Wall Street, are subverting the nation’s democracy. He says that Wall Street is at the center of a “rigged” economy and that fraud was, and remains, widespread and highly destructive. Main Street has been decimated yet virtually no one who engaged in the massive fraud resulting in the financial collapse of 2007-08 was charged with a crime, he stresses. The big banks have gotten bigger since the collapse, raising the risk of yet another collapse and keeping alive “Too Big to Fail” policies of the Bush era.

Sanders points out that the government provides capital to banks at near-zero interest rates; yet consumers pay substantial, often double-digit, interest rates. This gouging in the financial sector is but a piece of the “rigged” system that provides hedge fund traders, bankers and brokers billions in salaries and bonuses.

Sanders would break up the big banks through a return to the protections of the Glass-Steagall Act, an FDR-era control on banking abuse.

Tax plan: Sanders proposes a broad tax plan aimed at the very rich, increasing the scope and rates of the estate tax, including an additional billionaire’s surtax of 10%, ending tax breaks for dynasty trusts, increasing payments to the Social Security trust fund from those making more than \$250,000 a year, ending tax breaks for capital gains and dividends for the wealthy. He supports a tax on Wall Street speculation that would raise \$300 billion annually and reduce high frequency trading and other “casino-like” activities.

HEALTHCARE

Sanders believes that healthcare is a right, not a privilege, and that the U.S. urgently needs to join the ranks of nations with national healthcare systems. “The only long-term solution to America’s healthcare crisis

is a single-payer national health care program,” he says.

Sanders supports single payer (Medicare of All), carried out through a payroll tax. He says that the tax would amount to far less money from family budgets than what the vast majority of Americans pay in total annual health-care costs under the current system. Commercial health insurance would be replaced by a system that gives priority to patient need, and providers, including hospitals, would remain in tact.

EDUCATION

College: Sanders believes that free access to a university education should be a top national priority. His website provides: “Make tuition free at public colleges and universities.” He advocates a variety of steps to eliminate financial barriers to getting a higher education.

Student Debt Assistance: Sanders has called for an end to the “federal government ... making a profit on student loans.” He would “allow students to use need-based financial aid and work study programs to make college debt free. Rates for college loans should be “heavily reduced.”

Early Childhood Education: Sanders supports comprehensive childhood education in the U.S. Five years ago, he introduced the Foundations for Success Act, which would have awarded a grant to states allowing them to create an Early Care and Education System. The bill, had it passed, would have given residents the opportunity to enroll children, ages 6 weeks to kindergarten, in an early care and education program on a full time basis. He continues to support a national system of early childhood care, including universal pre-Kindergarten for 4-year olds.

Charter schools: Sanders is a staunch supporter of public schools. He opposes “privately-run” charter schools. He has not, however, made clear what he means, as most charter schools are part of public systems. He did say recently: “I believe charter schools should be held to the same standards of transparency as public schools.”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Incarceration: “I consider reforming our criminal justice system one of the most important things that a president of the United States can do,” says Sanders, calling the U.S. prison system an “international embarrassment”. He routinely points out that the U.S. incarceration rate is the highest in the world and says it would change under

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Clinton, cont.

“guarantee of up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave” with “at least a two-thirds wage replacement rate for workers.” She will “pay for paid leave by making the wealthiest pay their fair share—not raising taxes on working families.”

Wall Street: Clinton says she would work against the so-called “Too Big to Fail” banking system. She supports Dodd-Frank, a law passed after the bank bailout that raised the bar on Wall Street regulation but has been criticized as inadequate in its control of banks and protection of consumers. She says she will “offer plans to rein in excessive risks on Wall Street and ensure that stock markets work for everyday investors, not just high frequency traders and those with the best—or fastest—connections.”

Clinton has not endorsed a tax on Wall Street speculation, which would raise billions in tax revenue to create jobs while curbing high frequency trading and financial misdeeds that led to the 2008 crash of the economy and the Great Recession.

Clinton opposes reinstituting the Glass-Steagall Act, a law that controlled banking and commercial trading mergers and protected consumers from abuse.

Clinton has been criticized for taking donations and personal fees for speeches from the big banks that were responsible for the 2008 crash and received the biggest bailout in history from the government treasury.

TAX PLAN

Clinton supports the “Buffett Rule,” requiring people earning more than \$1 million a year to pay at least a 30% tax rate. She also promises to tighten loopholes like the “carried interest loophole” which lets wealthy financiers pay low tax rates. She proposes expanding the estate tax to those worth more than \$3.5 million (down from the current \$5.5 million). She proposes a 4% surtax on all income over \$5 million.

HEALTHCARE

Like her jobs plan, Clinton favors a “market” approach to healthcare, relying principally on the commercial health insurance industry that receives enormous profits from consumer paid premiums that continue to rise. She sees the achievement of universal access to care through the expansion of the ACA and Medicaid

to states and most recently she added a call for a “public option” to broaden the choice of insurance plans; Clinton supports a tax credit of up to \$5,000 per family to offset only a portion of excessive out-of-pocket and premium costs above 5% of income and provide other tax credits. She will invest in navigators, advertising and other outreach activities to make ACA enrollment easier. Clinton does not support a single payer (Medicare For All) system that would cover everyone and end gouging of consumers by private insurers.

EDUCATION

College: Clinton would enhance federal assistance on education in a “New College Compact” that would also require states to increase their own spending and universities to control spending. Families still would need to contribute, but students wouldn’t have to take out loans to attend public schools.

“I believe that we should make community college free. We should have debt-free college if you go to a public college or university. You should not have to borrow a dime to pay tuition,” Clinton says. “I disagree with free college for everybody. I don’t think taxpayers should be paying to send Donald Trump’s kids to college.”

Student Debt Assistance: Clinton’s “New College Compact” provides that “everyone who has student debt should be able to finance it at lower rates.”

Early Childhood Education: Clinton supports universal education for 4-year olds and would “invest in early childhood programs like Early Head Start” to “ensure that every 4-year-old in America has access to high-quality preschool in the next 10 years.”

Charter schools: Long a supporter of charter schools and the stream of public money sent to support them, Clinton recently backed away from this position.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Incarceration: Clinton would reduce mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenses by cutting them in half. She would encourage the use of “smart strategies”—such as police body cameras—and end racial profiling to rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities. Her campaign does not accept contributions from federally

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Sanders, cont.

his presidency. He links job creation and educational opportunity to reduced rates of incarceration.

Sanders also calls for an end to for-profit prisons, the removal of marijuana from the federal list of controlled substances, elimination of the death penalty and end mandatory minimum sentencing. “Too many lives have been destroyed because of police records,” Sanders says, noting the issue affects both white and African Americans.

The disproportionately high rate of incarceration for African American males and the criminalization of school-aged African Americans he terms a “tragedy” — “the destruction of an entire generation.”

Sanders wants to keep nonviolent offenders out of jail with alternative sentencing: rehabilitation and community service programs instead of jail time.

Youth programs: Sanders believes in government action for jobs. He supports full-time work for young adults so that they can achieve stability, have decent living conditions and build a future. Sanders introduced the Employ Young Americans Now Act last year, a bill that would spend \$4 billion to provide one million jobs for young Americans ages 16-24. In addition, the bill allocates \$1.5 billion for job training for hundreds of thousands of youth who, in many cases, finished high school but were unable to attend college and had few job opportunities

Guns: Sanders supports only a partial ban on assault weapons and has called for “common sense gun reform.” In the debates he said, “I voted for instant background check, which I want to see strengthened and expanded. I voted to end the so-called gun show loophole.” Sanders voted against liability for gun dealers

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Energy and new jobs: Sanders is calling for a cut in U.S. carbon pollution of 40% by 2030 and by over 80% by 2050 by putting a tax on carbon pollution, repealing fossil fuel subsidies and making massive investments in energy efficiency and clean, sustainable energy such as wind and solar power.

Concretely, he is introducing the Clean Energy Worker Just Transition Act to provide comprehensive benefits to workers to transition to making solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries.

CONTINUED ON THIRD COLUMN

Clinton, cont.

registered lobbyists or PACs of private prison companies.

Youth programs: Clinton underscores a federal apprenticeship program as a path to reducing youth unemployment. She proposes rewarding businesses with a tax credit of \$1,500 for every apprentice they hire. She says that the program would encourage businesses to take on more young workers.

Guns: Clinton has promised to “strengthen background checks and close dangerous loopholes in the current system,” including Internet sales. She wants to “hold irresponsible dealers and manufacturers accountable.” Her plan calls for “repealing the law that prevents victims of gun violence from suing manufacturers and dealers, and backing punitive action against “bad-actor” dealers that “knowingly supply straw purchasers and traffickers.”

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Energy and new jobs: Clinton says she will create good-paying jobs by making the U.S. “the clean energy superpower of the 21st century.” She will set national goals to have 500 million solar panels installed, cut energy waste in homes, schools, and hospitals by a third and reduce American oil consumption by a third.

Clinton plans to revitalize coal communities so that coal miners, power plant operators, transportation workers, and their families are helped through economic diversification and job creation.

Clinton did, however, encourage developing countries to sign deals with American fossil fuel companies to extract their shale gas through fracking. As a senator, she voted in favor of a bill opening new Gulf Coast areas to offshore oil drilling.

Public health system: Clinton pledges to “defend, implement, and extend smart pollution and efficiency standards, including the Clean Power Plan, which will prevent 3,600 premature deaths and 90,000 asthma attacks annually.”

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Key Endorsements: Service Employees International Union, American Federation of Teachers, Planned Parenthood, National Organization for Women.

Republican Primary Candidates



Donald J. Trump
(Businessman/Celebrity)

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES

IMMIGRATION: Mr. Trump wants to build a 2,000 mile wall underlying four states from California to Texas. In his campaign announcement speech, he said, “I will build a great, great wall on our southern border and I will make Mexico pay for that wall.”

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS: Trump wants to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. A campaign press release stated, “Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Senator Ted Cruz
(R – TX)

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES

MARRIAGE DISCRIMINATION: Senator Cruz thinks states should have a right to discriminate against gay couples. He told a right-wing radio host that court cases upholding marriage equality constitute “a real threat to our liberty.”

INFLUENCE OF WEALTH ON ELECTIONS: Cruz accused Democrats who were trying to give Congress the power to regulate campaign financing of attempting to “expressly repeal the free-speech protections of the First Amendment.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Sanders, cont.

Sanders’ supports the creation of a Clean-Energy Workforce of 10 million good-paying jobs by creating a 100% clean energy system. He supports transitioning toward a completely nuclear-free system for electricity, heating, and to clean up the air and water, and decrease U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Public health system: Sanders supports the creation of “a national environmental and climate justice plan, and increased funding to public health departments” according to his website. He underscores “the heightened public health risks faced by low-income and minority communities. Low-income and minority neighborhoods will continue to be the hardest hit if we don’t act to stop climate change now.”

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: National Nurses United, Communications Workers of America, MoveOn.org, Working Families Party



Senator Marco Rubio
(R – FL)

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES

HEALTHCARE REFORM: Senator Rubio wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with an entirely privatized healthcare system. According to his campaign website, “Obamacare has revealed the painful consequences of placing our faith in big government. Government’s ambitions may be limitless, but its abilities are not. The free market,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Republican Primary Candidates

Trump, cont.

representatives can figure out what is going on.”

WEALTH INEQUALITY: Trump doesn't want heirs to fortunes, like himself, to have to pay any taxes on their inheritance. From his campaign website: “No family will have to pay the death tax. You earned and saved that money for your family, not the government. You paid taxes on it when you earned it.”

TAX PLAN: Mr. Trump's plan calls for capping the amount of owners' business income that can be paid in taxes, eliminating the estate tax, and reducing the number of tax brackets and rates. According to the Tax Policy Center, his plan would lose the US \$9.5 trillion in revenue.

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, Conservative Pundit Ann Coulter, the American Freedom Party (a white supremacy organization classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center)

Cruz, cont.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: Cruz wants to eliminate Planned Parenthood and, on his campaign's website, says “We shouldn't send \$500 million of taxpayer money to fund an ongoing criminal enterprise.” Furthermore, “I intend to... instruct the Department of Justice to open an investigation into these videos and to prosecute Planned Parenthood for any criminal violations.”

TAX PLAN: Cruz would eliminate the Payroll Tax, the Estate Tax, and the Corporate Income Tax, and replace them with a flat tax of 10% for labor income and 16% for business income. According to the Tax Policy Center, his plan would cause the U.S. to lose \$8.6 trillion in revenue over a decade.

NEW YORK: Cruz has attacked New Yorkers, criticizing what he terms “New York values.” He describes New Yorkers as “socially liberal or pro-abortion or pro-gay-marriage” and inclined to “focus around money and the media.”

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Georgia Right to Life, Gun Owners of America, National Organization for Marriage



Governor John Kasich (R – OH)

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES

EXPAND CHARTER SCHOOLS, STANDARDIZED TESTING: As CBS News reports, “Kasich champions the expansion of charter schools, more school vouchers that allow state residents to attend the school of their choice, even if it is a private or religious school, and the increased use of testing to evaluate teachers' success.” As his website puts it, “Ohio has quadrupled the number of available vouchers and increased the number of schools whose students are eligible for vouchers.”

GUN PROLIFERATION: Kasich opposes any public efforts to enact gun safety regulations. His website includes this heading, “Removing Burdensome Restrictions for Law-

Rubio, cont.

when allowed to function as intended, has no such limitations. It has an inexhaustible ability to empower our people and meet their needs.”

IRAN: Rubio wants to reverse Obama's diplomatic gains with Iran. He has said that as president he would “absolutely” re-impose sanctions on Iran and that he “will back this up with a credible threat of military force” against the country.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Rubio wants to allow oil and gas corporations to wreck the environment. His website demands that we “Immediately Approve the Keystone XL Pipeline,” “Expedite Approval of American Natural Gas Exports,” “Stop President Obama's Carbon Mandates.”

TAX PLAN: Rubio's tax proposal

Abiding Concealed Carry Licensees” and notes, “John Kasich enacted legislation protecting Ohio's concealed carry laws, including protecting the privacy of permit holders and allowing for reciprocity licenses with other states where permit holders can carry their firearms.”

GROUND TROOPS TO FIGHT ISIS:

Kasich believes in sending American ground troops to Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS, telling CNN, “Mark my words ... at some point it will require boots on the ground for the world to be able to deal with this problem,” adding, “[T]o say that we're going to stop ISIS by just dropping bombs, it'll either preserve the status quo, or they'll make slight gains.”

TAX PLAN: Gov. Kasich's tax plan would lower the top individual tax rate from 39.6% to 28%, reduce long-term capital gains tax rates to 15%, eliminate the estate tax, lower the top business tax rates from 35% to 25% and double the research and development tax credit for small businesses. According to Robertson Williams, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center, “This looks like a pretty big tax cut for the top end and a little bit at the bottom.”

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, TV Personality Montel Williams, Alabama Governor Robert J. Bentley

would convert the federal income tax into a consumption tax by not taxing investment income of individuals and by converting the corporate income tax into a cash-flow consumption tax. It would replace most deductions and exemptions with a universal credit and eliminate estate taxes; he would move the US to a territorial tax system, meaning that the government would only collect taxes earned on American soil which would leave all foreign income of U.S.-based international corporations untaxed. Taxes would fall at all income levels, with high-income households benefiting the most. According to the Tax Policy Center, his plan would lose the US \$6.8 trillion in revenue over the next decade.

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Former NY Governor George Pataki, Former GOP Candidate Bobby Jindal, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley



Ben Carson, MD

CAMPAIGN PLEDGES

HEALTHCARE: Dr. Carson said in a 2013 speech: “Obamacare is really I think the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery. And it is in a way, it is slavery in a way, because it is making all of us subservient to the government, and it was never about health care. It was about control.”

CLIMATE CHANGE: Carson does not believe that humans are causing the planet to warm. “I know there are a lot of people who say ‘overwhelming science,’ but then when you ask them to show the overwhelming science, they never can show it,” he told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “There is no overwhelming science that the things that are going on are man-caused and not naturally caused.”

PROHIBIT MUSLIMS FROM BECOMING PRESIDENT:

Carson told NBC News, “I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation, I absolutely would not agree with that.” Asked for clarification, Carson said that a requirement for the Presidency should be that “you have to reject the tenets of Islam.”

TAX PLAN: Dr. Carson has said that his tax plan is “based on tithing.” It would impose a 14.9% flat tax across the board for income above 150% of the poverty level. He would also eliminate the estate tax, taxes of capital gains and dividends, and the Alternative Minimum Tax, and allow business to immediately write off the full cost of investments.

KEY ENDORSEMENTS: Actor Mickey Rourke, Actor Kirk Cameron, MMA Fighter Vitor Belfort

NYSNA endorses Todd Kaminsky, an ally for Long Island healthcare

Todd Kaminsky has been a New York State Assembly member only since fall 2014 but has in a very short time delivered big for South Shore residents still recovering from the destruction of Hurricane Sandy. He helped speed up reimbursement for housing reconstruction and to restore healthcare services following the storm's closure of Long Beach Hospital.

He is now running to represent Long Island's 9th New York State Senate District, which was held by the former Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos prior to his recent conviction. Long Beach, a barrier island off Long Island's south shore, has a year-round population of 33,000 that swells considerably in the summer months.

February 16 was *Nurses Night* at Kaminsky's campaign office. Marie

Milano, RN, NYSNA member at Franklin Hospital, was among the NYSNA volunteers who called prospective voters and urged support for Kaminsky in the April special election. "Too often, nurses don't know how much influence we have. People listen to us! It's so important that we use our voices on issues that affect our patients and our ability to do our jobs well."

Work to be done

Kaminsky told *NY Nurse*, "We still have work to do in Long Beach. Emergency room services have been restored, but residents still lack a full service hospital. We've got to ensure that the community has a say in the types of services available to them, and that caregivers have the support they need to deliver it."



Todd Kaminsky with Liz Erneta, RN, Southside Hospital (left) and Marie Milano, RN, Franklin Hospital

In addition to his efforts on Long Island, Kaminsky demonstrated his commitment to the well being of all New Yorkers with his vote in favor of the *New York Health Act* (A05062) during the Assembly's May 2015 floor vote.

"Too many decisions about healthcare are being made on the basis of profit. It's so important to have someone in the legislature that we know is willing to stand by us and behind us on issues that we care about as nurses," said Ms. Milano. "We all need to be working to elect people like Todd Kaminsky who will put patients before profits."

Kaminsky is thrilled to have NYSNA's endorsement and pledged to live up to the nurses' expectations: "For too long, the needs of nurses have been ignored. You will have a fighter in me."



NYSNA members (l to r): Kencie Raphael, RN, St. Joseph Hospital; Liz Erneta, RN, Southside Hospital; and Victoria Diaz, RN, St. Catherine of Siena, on the phones for Todd Kaminsky

Southside nurses win major staffing victory

NYSNA nurses at Southside Hospital are looking forward to a safer patient care environment following the hospital's February 11 announcement that it will add 11 full-time RN positions.

"This would not have happened without nurses coming together," said John Young, an RN in the hospital's Emergency Department. "The past months in the ED have been very busy both in terms of volume and acuity. A high census in the hospital results in holds of up to 36 hours."

Southside's Executive Committee arranged an off-site meeting where

Emergency Department nurses aired concerns about unsafe staffing and assignments. NYSNA RNs quickly filed a Step 2 class action grievance. Southside's Chief Nursing Officer listened as nurse after nurse presented compelling evidence. At the end of the meeting, she agreed to work with an Emergency Department committee to address the issues.

Unity gets results

A short time later, nurses came together over similar conditions on their Med/Surg Unit, and again, NYSNA members filed a class action Step 2 grievance. Nurses met

with the CNO, noting that staffing was particularly bad on weekends and evenings. The nurses also started a texting campaign with the director of the Unit and CNO, sending them staffing data and escalating the notices every time they worked under protest due to a shortage of nurses or nurses aides.

The new nurses will help with ED holds and the Med/Surg and Telemetry Units, freeing float pool nurses to cover sick calls. "We know that staffing up will take time, but there's a light at the end of the tunnel," Mr. Young was happy to report. "Solidarity paid off."

Zika: What New Yorkers need to know

The species of mosquitoes that carry the Zika virus have not yet made it as far north as the continental United States but they pose a risk to anyone who travels to affected areas, particularly women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant. Evidence suggests that the virus is linked to Latin America's current microcephaly epidemic.

Zika is most often contracted through a mosquito bite, but also can be transmitted in utero, through sexual intercourse, and potentially through blood transfusions. Pregnant women, and all women of reproductive age, are advised to take precautions with partners who have



recently travelled to the Caribbean, Central, or South America.

Only about one in five of those infected will show symptoms that may include fever, rash, joint pain and eye redness. The Centers for Disease Control advises the best prevention is to avoid getting bitten.

Although the risk of occupational exposure in a healthcare setting is minimal, as with any potential blood-borne pathogen, it is important to always follow standard precautions when handling bodily fluids or other potentially infectious materials.

A February 20 story in *The New York Times* warns that over the coming decades, global warming is likely to increase the geographic range and speed the life cycle of heat-loving mosquitoes like those that carry Zika, enabling them to survive in more temperate climates.

In the shorter term, the CDC estimates that the number of Zika cases likely will increase among travelers visiting or returning to the USA, and in some areas these imported cases may result in local spread of the virus. In early February, Governor Cuomo announced that New York would offer free testing to all pregnant women who had traveled to a country experiencing a Zika outbreak.

For more information, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika>

NYSNA nurses campaign for safe staffing at Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus event

Busloads of NYSNA nurses descended on our state's capitol on February 13 to amp up support for our Safe Staffing legislation at this year's New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus. Held annually in February, the Caucus brings together elected and community leaders from around the state. This year's theme, "Restoring Faith & Justice: In Pursuit of Empowering Our Communities," set the tone for an exceptional day of activism and advocacy.

Building public support

To get the word out about our safe staffing campaign, NYSNA RNs hosted an educational table outside the Convention Center's Meeting Rooms. Nurses handed out flyers and gathered hundreds of signatures in support of bringing the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act to a vote in both the Assembly and Senate this session.

After filling every corner of our petitions with signatures, NYSNA nurses joined together to create a sea of red and presented the giant petitions to state legislators.

Throughout the day, NYSNA nurses continued to meet with elected and community leaders about

the need to support the Safe Staffing for Quality Care and the New York Health (Healthcare for All) Acts. Legislators pledged to redouble their efforts to pass legislation that would help protect New York patients.

Linice Zambrano, RN at Bronx Lebanon Hospital, said, "The



"There were nurses who were attending the caucus for the very first time. You could really feel the togetherness."

Judith Cutchin, RN
Woodhull Medical and
Mental Health Center



Four members from Bronx Lebanon Hospital who attended the Caucus lunch: (l-r) Joan Bruce, RN; Kanchana Barker, RN; Marylene Tejanos, RN; and Lenice Zambrano, RN



Members on their way to deliver the petition to the legislators.



State Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson with NYSNA President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN, (on her left) and members displaying the safe staffing petition.

freezing temperatures couldn't keep nurses away. NYSNA nurses were more united than ever in asking our Senators and Assembly members to support the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act. We handed out flyers to both the community and elected representatives about the importance of the bill, and we had them sign our petitions."

Nurses also attended workshops and panels focusing on issues central to NYSNA's legislative agenda and the factors that contribute to community health: economic security and living wages; paid family leave; community input into healthcare funding; reforming the justice system; expanding affordable housing; maintaining collective bargaining rights; strategies to reduce gun violence; eliminating healthcare disparities and building healthcare equity; and containing the costs of prescription drugs, among many others.

Need for universal healthcare

Jalisa Saud, RN and NYSNA release time rep in the NYCH+H, represented NYSNA on a panel on single payer hosted by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, Chair of the Health Committee. "The single payer panel was an important opportunity for NYSNA to address universal healthcare against the backdrop of inequalities in the system today. My comments stressed how single payer improves quality and safety in healthcare. Quality care means having enough qualified professionals at the bedside. And single payer truly is a win-win."



Jalisa Saud, RN, spoke at both the single payer panel and labor lunch.

At the labor lunch, Ms. Saud had another opportunity to take the podium when she presented the Beacon of Light award to Carmen Charles, President of AFSCME Local 420, NYC's Municipal Hospitals Employees Union. Representing the solidarity between NYSNA nurses and AFSCME caregivers, Ms. Saud praised Ms. Charles' "vision of empowering

every union member through education and creating a higher level of activism and advocacy."

Judith Cutchin, RN at Woodhull Medical Center, was moved by the experiences of the day. "Caucusing went very well," she said. "We felt empowered to keep advocating for our patients and engaging our colleagues. There were nurses who were attending the caucus for the very first time. You could really feel the togetherness."

More work to do

Ms. Zambrano concluded with a call for further action: "The caucus in Albany went well, but our work is not yet done, and that's what we hope to accomplish on Lobby Day. We need more nurses, especially the younger ones to come out, get oriented on the issues that matter and join us so that we can ensure that our patients get the best quality care. We have a lot of work to do and we are definitely not done yet!"



Kevin Davis, RN, Westchester Medical Center, recruits a petition signer.



Sharon Barker, RN, Kings County Hospital Center, with one of the day's younger activists, Aisha Lawrence.

Public health nurses: Going the extra mile for our patients

The nursing job at one of New York's 62 counties is very different from that in a typical hospital. Many county nurses are field-based and directed out of the health, social service and mental health departments. They may provide home

visits, run vaccination clinics, conduct cancer and TB screenings, or administer flu shots.

Regardless of the particular job and which county they work for, these nurses work largely work outside of an institutional setting and may travel miles every day to

bring healthcare to those who need it most.

NYSNA nurses employed by Onondaga County in Syracuse and by Westchester County in the Mid Hudson Valley are both in the process of negotiating new contracts with better protections for patient care.

Onondaga County nurses mobilize for a fair contract

On a typical day, an Onondaga County public health nurse may drive a hundred miles, traveling into Syracuse to monitor a woman with a complex pregnancy, getting back in her car to drive to conduct an assessment of an infant with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and ending the day administering flu shots or immunizations to children in yet another area.

"Most of our patients are those that no one else will see: the disenfranchised, the uninsured, the underinsured," said Linda Gearity, RN, and LBU Vice President. The nurses travel throughout the county's 800 square miles and 60 municipalities and provide services in many low-income and isolated areas.

Each has a caseload of about 40 patients that must be seen at least once every two weeks. "We work

with so much autonomy that being part of a strong union is really essential. Because of NYSNA, we know can stand up for our patients and insist on doing our jobs in a safe manner," said Wendy Czajak, RN and Onondaga LBU President.

Public supports nurses

At a February 2nd bargaining session, 18 nurses presented two petitions to Carl Hummel, the county's chief negotiator. The first included more than 2,000 signatures gathered at last September's New York State Fair and called on all Central New York providers, including Onondaga County, to staff safely and negotiate fair and equitable nurse contracts.

The second petition, signed by the bargaining unit's members, states that the nurses are committed to winning a fair contract with the county.

The Onondaga County Executive and Legislature voted in 2015 to give themselves a substantial pay raise but have lagged on settling the nurses' union contract. NYSNA RNs have mobilized and united like never before to send a strong message to management: it's time to settle a fair contract with the nurses who care for the county's residents.

New negotiating approach

LBU President Wendy Czajak said that they had made progress in key areas that would help retain skilled RNs, and that nurses are committed to staying united until the contract is settled.

"This is the first time we've involved so many nurses in the bargaining process, and I suspect it's come as a shock to some in management. They're not accustomed to dealing with a large group of nurse activists," Ms. Czajak said.

Westchester County RNs rev up for negotiations

SINCE THE START of the year, the members of Westchester County's NYSNA Negotiating Committee have been meeting to gather ideas, poll their coworkers, and prepare proposals to present to management. The 45 nurses work primarily in programs run out of the county's health and social services departments. A few are assigned to county jails, as well.

James Heuberger, RNC and LBU Vice President, and a supervising nurse for the Department of Social Services' Medicaid private duty nursing, personal care, and care at home program, said, "Most of our members are in the field every day, working on their own. They don't

have a coworker down the hall to bounce ideas off of. Our union gives us that connection with other nurses and a united voice on global issues like staffing."

New experience

This negotiation is the first for NYSNA Negotiating Committee member Remiya Mathew, RN. She started working for Westchester a little less than two years ago in the personal care program and is looking forward to the experience of contract negotiations. "I got my feet wet this past fall working with our union's election committee," she said, and decided she wanted to do more. "Knowing that my



James Heuberger, RNC,
Westchester County



Remiya Mathew, RN, Westchester County

NYSNA nurse colleagues are there to back me up gives me the security I need to best do my job."

Sisterhood on Staten Island

NYSNA's Treasurer Patricia Kane, RN, is the Staten Island Sisterhood's 2016 Chair. At the annual meeting in early February, 12 NYSNA RNs who work in psychiatry and substance abuse joined her as she asked for collective focus to increase awareness of substance abuse and to help educate parents to better deal with the issue.

The Staten Island Sisterhood was formed 2010 when the SI chapter of New York State Women issued a call

to the island's volunteer women's groups concerned with the welfare of women and families to join together and approach issues with a united voice. There are no fees or governing body. The women simply work together throughout the year pooling their talents and resources and volunteering their time to foster positive change. Leadership rotates yearly and the chairing organization guides the Sisterhood's focus for the coming year.



The Staten Island Sisterhood's 2016 Annual Meeting brought together representatives from Amethyst House; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Alumnae Chapter; Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority; National Council of Negro Women, SI: NAMI; New York State Women, Staten Island, Richmond and Bay Ridge chapters; Richmond University Medical Center, Soroptimist-Int'l-SI; Staten Island University Hospital Inpatient and Outpatient Behavioral; UAME Church; and the Women's Democratic Club-SI.



Labor solidarity in Lockport

Jane James, RN at Newfane Hospital's Emergency Department, and her two sons delivered lunch to some of the 44 Lockport steelworkers that have been on the picket lines since last August.



Central District Inter-regional

NYSNA Nurses from Ellis, Bellevue Women's, Nathan Littauer, St. Elizabeth, and Oneida hospitals gathered at Beardslee Castle for the Central District Inter-regional on February 10, attended by NYSNA President Judy

Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN. The agenda focused on winning safe staffing legislation and ways in which the regions' nurses can support colleagues with ongoing contract campaigns at St. Elizabeth, Oneida, and Nathan Littauer.

Neither cold, nor snow...



Extreme cold weather over Valentine's Day weekend caused infrastructure problems at Nathan Littauer Hospital, leading several units to be shut down and patients to be diverted, but NYSNA nurses and caregivers worked around the clock to make patients safe and comfortable until operations returned to normal.

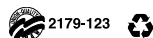


RN Dori Kila to the rescue

When NYC was hit in late January with its first big blizzard of the winter, Dori Kila, RN, NYSNA member at Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospital, was heralded by grateful coworkers. She drove night shift nurses to the hospital to relieve exhausted day shift nurses and brought them food as well—all the more remarkable because she herself was not scheduled to work.

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2016 NYSNA LOBBY DAY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 | ALBANY

Lobbying for Safe Staffing to Improve Patient Outcomes

Join nurses from across New York to raise the alarm
in Albany at NYSNA's 2016 Lobby Day.

- ✓ Tell lawmakers to support the Safe Staffing
for Quality Care Act (S. 782/A.8580-A)
- ✓ Stand up to defend and strengthen our
nursing practice
- ✓ Speak up for NY Health, a law to guarantee
healthcare for all New Yorkers

Save your seat. Register today!



Download a Registration Form at www.nysna.org/lobbyday.

Complete the information on the form, return to your Rep, or fax to 518-782-9530, or e-mail to mcp@nysna.org or
return by first-class mail to NYSNA MCP, 155 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210. **SEE YOU THERE!!**