

New York nurse

the official publication of the new york state nurses association

Westchester,
Lower Hudson
Valley Region

Convention 2017



Central
Region



Staten
Island



New
York
City



Capital,
North
Region



Western
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Long
Island

VOTE NO! ON CON CON, P. 4



By Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN
NYSNA President



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A world apart

No, it's not easy being a nurse in today's medical environment. Many of us feel that the little autonomy we once had has been eviscerated with modules, protocols and checklists. We feel like we spend more time documenting what we do (or are supposed to do) than spending time actually doing it!

We leave work feeling "incomplete." We work in an environment that seems to be a cauldron of hostility: frustrated and angry patients, cynical co-workers, pressured managers who, in turn, pressure us, and our own insecurities about what kind of a job we are doing. Did I remember to chart that last blood pressure? Did I thoroughly examine that wound? Was I rushing through that admission, perhaps missing a key element in my assessment?

We fear for our licenses, our patients, our futures. We worry about spending enough quality time with our kids, spouses, parents. We dissolve our fears in mindless television programs, internet surfing, social media, on-line shopping and the digital world that has overtaken the social constructs that once formed flesh and blood "community."

Solidarity

Research has shown that human longevity and happiness are both enhanced by positive social interaction, a sense of belonging and the presence of a caring, loving community that we can turn to in time of need, and that we contribute to. The increasing depression that we observe in our society today—aside from the ailing economy—may very well be due to the social alienation so many of us feel due to the loss of the culture of community and its partner: solidarity.

Two thousand NYSNA members attended our 2017 Convention in October, where the concept of community and solidarity practically permeated the air in the Javits Center. Workshops focused on clinical issues as well as social issues: the social determinants of health. It's naturally impossible to separate the dysfunctional health care system, climate change, poverty and violence, from the concept of wellness. The

educational sessions are designed to not only teach but to forge stronger bonds among and between us.

The support we received from our union sisters and brothers was astounding, as speaker after speaker extolled the virtues of our profession, of our actions, of our union. It was made clear that we have an influence over legislation and elections—an influence that is growing. Our community allies' participation at the booths and in our programs proved that the sum total of the union is far bigger than its parts.

The empathy and action exhibited by the hundreds of nurses who have volunteered for disaster missions in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean, or who have donated time and money to relief and recovery



US Virgin Islands relief supporters Montefiore registered nurses Collette Dobbins (left) and Lourdes Blanco

efforts, I reflect upon the things our team has seen during our time here, as we evolve our recovery network model.

I think about the mom bathing her little son under the trickle of probably toxic water that escaped from a makeshift pipe drilled into



Barranquitas, PR, where the university president has agreed we use their gym as a medical clinic.

every effort, only further illustrates our own natural tendency to serve our society—our solidarity with people in trouble.

The Convention theme of Super Hero Defenders, while Halloweenish and entertaining—it's so important to have fun—was no joke. The advocacy role that caregivers play in our world today is built around the defense of those in need, and the heroic and selfless work we do, on the job, and off the job. Nursing doesn't end when we sign out at the end of a shift.

The unspeakable...

As I write this by lantern light in the mountains of Puerto Rico, the unpleasant odor of mosquito repellent only intoxicating these insect

a rocky slope; about the long line of people standing in the hot sun with empty containers and bottles, patiently waiting their turn to fill them up with a weak hydrant stream; about denuded forests and once upon a time palm trees that look like shaved telephone poles; about FEMA—too little, too late—distributing single plastic water bottles and a bag or two of snack-sized cheetos to long lines of hungry, parched lipped US citizens; about the highways just...ending as roads are impassable; about the bridges that fell and the isolated people on the other side that have no egress from their destroyed houses; about the tarps that replace roofs; the power lines that look like a spaghetti dinner; the terror of



approaching a highway intersection with no traffic lights.

I think about the suffering of an entire nation that no one in their right mind could deny was a direct result of the cruel and unnecessary warming of our planet and the imposed austerity on a country, indebted to hedge fund vultures, with a fiscal oversight board that saw repaying the super-wealthy was more important than maintaining an electrical grid, a water supply system and a transportation infrastructure.

Hope

Then I am reminded of other things: the 300 NYSNA members who have already volunteered for medical missions; the 350 AFL-CIO members who flew here shortly after María departed, leaving



her devastation, and hit the ground running; the hospital workers who arrived with their teams to areas in need; the resilient, generous and creative people of Puerto Rico and the unions: the Federation of Teachers (FMPR) and their work brigades, the General Workers Union (UGT) and their efforts to form care centers with us, the Electrical Workers (UTIER) work-



ing around the clock to repair power lines, and so many others, as well as communities, individuals, mayors, seniors, children and families who, even as they suffered, offered what little they had to neighbors, to rebuild, to survive.

I have heard that nearly 100,000 people have already fled (life without electricity, cell phone signals, water and communication is not easy) and that more will leave. It is no migration—it is exile. I hope many will return. There is a saying here: Puerto Rico se levanta! Puerto Rico will rise again.

We are delivering care to people suffering untold harm, who in spite of it all, are humble, gracious, generous, teaching us as we treat their infections and wounds. This is community. This is solidarity. This is nursing.



Volunteers, supporters and medical supplies received in Puerto Rico.



NYSNA and New York Recovery Network

urge DONATIONS for hurricane relief & recovery

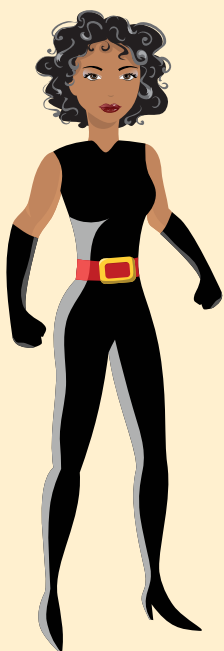
go to:
www.paypal.me/sosmedicalmission





By Jill Furillo, RN,
NYSNA Executive
Director

Special interest groups would use the convention to reduce the power of labor unions as well as seek the privatization of public services.



No! on Con Con

In theory, it is a democratic opening that should further the interests of New Yorkers. Every 20 years, our state constitution provides that a referendum be held on whether to hold a constitutional convention. First adopted in 1777 in New York, just a year after the U.S. Declaration of Independence, it was a profoundly democratic principle. But the modern dynamics of such a convention are far afield from what our founders had in mind.

In today's world, special interests with very deep pockets have latched on to the prospect of a constitutional convention. Their interests are antithetical to the protection of working people, our environment, safe workplaces, public education and more.

Public-sector unions a target

A constitutional convention would put everything on the table for discussion, including the constitutional mandates against the cutting of pensions, a guarantee

to public education, protection of workers' compensation system, the right for public-sector unions to bargain collectively and a requirement that the state provide social welfare services.

\$300 million to fight us

Special interest groups would use the convention to reduce the power of labor unions as well as seek the privatization of public services. "Moneyed interests would use the opportunity to attack public employee pensions and our right to a free public education," said NYC Council Member Corey Johnson.

A convention in our state would be held against the backdrop of a national effort to erode social programs for the poor, and give a green light to austerity advocates.

Ironically, these same austerity forces overlook the price tag for a New York Constitutional Convention: \$300 million. That is the estimate of the tab our taxpayers would have to pick up to fund

this effort at deliberately anti-democratic democracy. Unaccountable convention delegates would receive the pay of a state legislator, or \$79,500 per year, and have the right to hire staff and receive pension credit.

With a short time to Election Day, North Central Bronx Hospital nurses are fired up about voting no on a Constitutional Convention! As NCB delegate, Cliff Duncan, RN, put it: "I don't think a Constitutional Convention would help workers in general. I think it would be damaging to unions, and therefore, it would be damaging to families. A Constitutional Convention wouldn't be for the rank and file—it would be for the special interests, who are trying to divest us of our political power." What are you doing between now and November 7 to spread the word about the dangers of a "Con Con"?!

Please screen a TV spot for NO!
vimeo.com/239664834



NYSNA Convention, 2017



The 2017 Convention hit a new high

The 2017 NYSNA Convention drew more than 2,000 members over the course of two days from around the state who renewed bonds with fellow members and met new ones. The spirit of camaraderie was strong. It was by all accounts an extraordinary gathering where our work as uncompromising patient advocates was reflected in many ways.

We heard from elected officials in New York City endorsed for reelection (see p. 12) and from an group of outstanding labor leaders with whom we have forged alliances on key issues (see p. 13) and stood shoulder to shoulder on picket lines in a number of critical labor battles. All paid tribute to the outstanding role our union has played across the state this year.

The drummers of **Batala New York** filled the hall with rhythm, as this special global arts project of more than 30 bands from around the world, with instruments and costumes from Salvador, north-eastern Brazil, were a powerful, resounding presence. A Patient Defenders Parade pulled together hundreds of nurses and supporters in a festive march through the hall.

Issues and answers filled our workshops

More than 20 workshops were held, with members participating and some with presentations from invited experts, eager to address our members and have a voice in

The spirit of camaraderie was strong.

a union that. “Climate Justice: How RNs Can Address the Global Warming Health Crisis,” (see photo, directly below), underscored the growing effects of climate change and our role in stopping it. Recent massive fires, floods and hurricanes, either directly or indirectly tied to man-made climate change, were on the minds of participants.

Patient Defenders village

Workshops addressed understaffing and its hazards, legislative advocacy campaigns, negotiations between RNs and hospital executives, retirement security, working

with community allies, and many others. “Defending Our Patients in the City That Never Sleeps,” was both a tribute to and a sounding board for night nurses (see p. 7).

The Patient Defenders Village, lined with colorful panels created to the theme of superheroes and integrating photos of our nurses from the different regions of our state, welcomed dozens of organizations allied with our causes: from economic justice/labor to environmental justice, immigrant rights and ethnic nurses associations, to disaster relief & recovery, community allies, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Judith Cutchin, RN, President, NYSNA's H+H/Mayorals Executive Council, speaks at the convention.



Batala New York drummers



Patient Defenders Village panel

2017 Convention

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

political/electoral advocacy groups. The Village was a reflection of our success in our continuing efforts to work with communities and allies.

Delegate Convention passed

Our Voting Body filled the final hours of Convention. In a significant action, members voted to amend our bylaws (the constitution of our union) to create a new democratic and transparent decision-making body at the top of our union, the Delegate Convention. Every local bargaining unit and also individual members will elect delegates to the Convention, with one delegate for every 50 members up to 200, and one delegate for every 100 additional members over 200. Diane Groneman, president of our local bargaining unit at Peconic Bay Medical Center, added a proposal to guarantee that the chair or president of each bargaining unit will also automatically be a delegate, and her proposal passed easily. Stay tuned: our first delegate election will happen in 2018.

It was an intensive two days for members and allies. For many, it was considered *the* outstanding convention of the last five years— a time of growth in membership, excellent new contracts, solidarity among members and allies, and a presence in a movement to make a more equal and just society. “NYSNA’s in the house!”



A salute to brave Utah nurse

ALEX WUBBELS, RN, University of Utah Hospital, faced a serious dilemma: would she follow hospital protocols that protected patients, or accede to the improper demands of a local Salt Lake City police officer? Wubbels’ patient was admitted to the hospital’s burn unit after his car was caught up in a chase—not in pursuit of him, but of another man, i.e., her patient was not a suspect. He was unconscious and Detective Jeff Payne demanded that blood be drawn from him.

Wubbels gave Payne a copy of hospital policy which stated clearly that blood could be drawn only with a patient’s permission or by court order, unless the patient was under arrest. Payne cast aside the policy document and handcuffed Wubbels, dragging her from her Unit to a police car.

Wubbels was never arrested. Payne was later fired.

Anthony Ciampa, RN and Second Vice President of NYSNA, interviewed Wubbels live via skype during the

Convention (photo above). Here’s an excerpt:

AC: So, you showed the police written hospital policy that protected the unconscious patient. Did they pay attention? Did they read it? Did they listen to you?

AW: Clearly, no.... I attempted to show it to the Officer in an effort to help him understand that I was trying to facilitate the right thing.

AC: Has anything like this ever happened to you before?

AW: No. As nurses, we all know what it means when we say “the pucker factor.” I was definitely nervous. I had told the charge nurse in the emergency department that I was scared. But I also knew that it didn’t benefit the situation to show fear.... I tried to do the best I could. Just like any one of us as nurses: we do that every day. Every day we show up at work and we just try to be and do the best we can for the patients.

Convention honors Anne Bové, RN

ANNE BOVÉ requires no introduction, especially to the people in this room, but I’m going to say one anyway. She is a professor, a nurse leader, a NYSNA champion, a political activist, and a clinical expert.

She has worked tirelessly as an advocate for our profession, for our community, and always, ALWAYS, as an advocate for our patients.

There is no greater role model for professional nursing and I am so lucky to know Anne as a colleague, mentor, and friend.

As she’s retiring for Bellevue (but not yet, because you’re still on payroll!), it’s only fitting that we recognize Anne formally at this convention.

Anne, from the bottom of my heart, and behalf of everyone here, thank you.

Therefore, I move that the 2017 NYSNA convention honor Anne Bové for her over 40 years of dedicated service to the NY public health system, our patients, and our union.



Todd Schultz, RN, LBU President, Bellevue Hospital, on a motion before the NYSNA Voting Body, October 12, 2017

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New York nurse

the official publication of the new york state nurses association



Night nurses from across New York state celebrate their hard work



The night nurse

The night nurse

“While everyone is getting up in the morning, we’re going to sleep.”



Remy Jamisolemin, RN, Montefiore Medical Center

Sijjad Khan, RN, is an ER night nurse at Brooklyn Hospital and knows how important his job is. “No one can predict when someone will get sick. I’m proud to be there when our patients need us the most.”

It’s not a job for everyone, but those who step up to the task are truly exceptional: consummate leaders and unwavering patient caregivers who are able to do more with less.

A night nurse’s clinical skills must be tip-top, as they are often the first and last line of defense. Their ability to multi-task is stretched to the extreme and yet they persevere, their compassion for patients on clear display.

While the rest of us sleep, night nurses go above and beyond the call of duty, keeping our families, loved ones, and patients safe in preparation for another New York day.

The job is certainly not without its challenges.

Working the night shift means interrupting natural sleep and

social schedules, missing out on important daytime activities, bearing added responsibility with fewer staff, and making sure to stay alert and safe.

“We have to function differently because when nighttime comes, that’s when we are at our best,” said Lisa Collins-Samuel, RN, Brooklyn Hospital. “What we see at night is different. Not everyone can do the night shift. We tend to have less

people, but we always make it work in our own unique way.”

The job

While a night nurse’s responsibilities and duties vary only slightly from her day nurse colleagues, adjustments have to be made to account for a smaller, overnight workforce.

During the day, there are countless administrators on duty. Every



Panelists discuss the challenges of night nursing at NYSNA's 2017 Convention



Many RNs joined the workshop after finishing a long night shift at their hospitals

Our union is important because we know we aren’t really alone.

The union makes sure we have our voices and concerns heard, especially since management isn’t often around when our problems come up.”

Cynthia Pilat, RN,
Erie County Medical Center

ing to sleep.”

unit has a manager on the floor, and all the service departments are fully staffed.

At night, it's the nurses who really run things. Often, there are no unit managers. At most facilities, one to three supervisors cover an entire hospital, with a nurse on every unit taking charge for a 12-hour shift. All the administrative work of running a floor—handling visitors, admissions, discharges, care coordination, patient transport—falls on the night nursing team. And when an emergency happens, night shift RNs have to do more with less, working with skeletal service and technical crews to alert off-site doctors and get patients the care they need and deserve.

“Being a night nurse teaches you to trust your instincts more,” said Lea Nason, RN, of Westchester Medical Center. “Sometimes you’re the only one there to make sure nothing goes wrong.”

Half of a hospital’s 24-hour work cycle primarily relies on nurses as the only on-site clinical experts.

All this while operating on little sleep.

Safety and health risks

Kings County Hospital nurse Patricia James, RN, works an eight-hour shift starting at 4 p.m. and ending around 12:30 a.m. Twice a week, she works a double shift and then attends NYSNA meetings. Many nights, Patricia says she’s lucky to get three hours of sleep.

At the end of a long shift, night nurses need to rest. But sleeping during the day can be difficult.

According to The World Health Organization, nighttime shift work can take a real toll on the body. The repeated disruption of the body’s circadian rhythm makes night workers more susceptible to safety



Roxana Silva, RN, Northwell Health System/Staten Island University Hospital-North

and health challenges. Studies have found a correlation between night shift workers and sleep deprivation, workplace injury, heart disease, musculoskeletal disorders, obesity, impaired glucose tolerance, and decreased insulin sensitivity.

“The lack of sleep is the most difficult part. Very seldom do we get enough sleep,” said Remy Jamisolamin, RN, at Montefiore Medical Center. “I have hypertension, diabetes and arthritis, and I don’t want my night shift hurting my health.”

The American Journal of Preventative Medicine followed 75,000 female registered nurses in the U.S. for 22 years and found that 11 percent who worked rotating night shifts experienced a shortened lifespan. Risk of death by cardiovascular disease jumped 19% for nurses who worked this way for six to 14 years, and increased another 23% in nurses who worked 15 years or more.

“While everyone sleeps, we are working,” said Roxana Silva, RN, at Northwell Health System/Staten Island University Hospital-North. “Until now, I’ve never had any health issues but since I started as a night nurse four years ago, I’ve noticed my health falter.”

Just getting home from work after a long night can be a challenge. According to one study, 56% of night nurses were found to be sleep deprived, and one in 10 said they have had a car accident that they believe was related to fatigue.

The potential for violent incidents to occur also increases on the

night shift. Because most hospital staff are off duty, visitors roam more freely, fewer staff are present to answer questions, patients can become agitated, security staff is limited, and risks are elevated.

Safe staffing

Though bed capacity remains the same, many floors also run with lower RN staffing at night.

“Short staffing is a real, daily problem,” said Collins-Samuel.

“It can be a lot more difficult at night due to the availability of resources,” said Sijjad, whose shift runs from 7 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Yasmine Beasejour, RN, LIJ Valley Stream Northwell and NYSNA Board Member



Being a night nurse teaches you to trust your instincts more. Sometimes you’re the only one there to make sure nothing goes wrong.”

Lea Nason, RN,
Westchester
Medical Center



Mercy Mathai, RN, Queens Hospital Center

Night nurse

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“At night, it’s just us and we have to do the best we can with what we have.”

A critical fight

While NYSNA has fought to achieve and won equal RN staffing on day and night shifts in many recent contracts, there is still a persistent myth that units need fewer nurses at night. Ending the shift staffing disparity remains an absolutely critical fight.

Overnight organizing

In many facilities, job openings are often on the night shift. In some cases, newer nurses will fill the night shifts. Nurse educators and clinical specialists work the day-shift, leaving a mentorship void for newer nurses. Given the scant resources on the night shift, many who would want to mentor and precept young nurses get overwhelmed with their own duties.

The hours can also make it difficult to join in union activity. “Because we’re working, night nurses often miss out on union meetings, conferences, and even photo shoots,” said Mercy Mathai, RN, of Queens Hospital Center. “We have to take a day off in order to attend events. It’s important for us to be seen and to remind every-



Kesha James, RN, Queens Hospital Center

one that we matter and to have our needs considered.”

Thanks to nurses like Sijjad, who serves on the Executive Committee at Brooklyn Hospital, NYSNA members keep each other up-to-date and engage in the work of building our union’s strength day and night.

“I am a resource for them,” Sijjad said of the 250 night nurses he represents as a union delegate. “The day shift finds out about things that aren’t passed on to us. I make my rounds to update members and to address member issues and concerns.”

Solidarity after dark

Veteran night nurses have picked up a few survival tricks along the

way: blackout drapes and earplugs for sleep during daylight hours; chamomile tea and reading before bed; carving out quality time with family and friends; making good food choices to combat lethargy; setting aside personal time to mentally recharge; and sticking to a schedule even on days off.

Most of all, nightshift RNs rely on co-worker camaraderie.

“Good, bad and different, we are a family,” said Collins-Samuel. “We hang out together; we work together; we get through the shift together; and we get close. I love my night nurses. I would never trade my job for any other in the world.”

Through it all, night shift nurses keep New York’s hospitals going.



'NYSNA's in the house!'

We often speak of solidarity, strength in numbers, the importance of standing together. For two full days, more than 1,200 NYSNA nurses turned these ideals into action by gathering at the biannual NYSNA Convention, held this year in New York City.

"I didn't realize how much fun it would be," said Marites David, RN, of Montefiore Moses. "It was my first convention, but I'm definitely coming back next year."

"Every time I come here there is something new to learn," said Ana Reyes, RN, of Montefiore Weiler. "The more information you bring back, the more you're able to fight back."

Unity and camaraderie

The theme of this year's convention was superheroes. Convention banners and materials designed in the style of comic books adorned the Javits Center, and the event slogan, "Defending Our Patients, Hospitals, Union & Practice," celebrated the daily heroic actions of our members.

Diane Wilson, RN, a former behavior health nurse at Bellevue Hospital, said she was looking forward to seeing her fellow nurses. "I'm retired, so I came to learn about retirement and ways I can continue to be part of conversations about safe staffing and workplace violence, both of which have been an issue throughout my whole career. I was a nurse for 36 years and a NYSNA member for 34. NYSNA means a lot. It's unity, it's camaraderie and friends, and it was the base of my practice."

Over the course of two days, members attended workshops and continuing education sessions (see pp. 5-6); joined a Labor Rally with 10 other powerhouse New York unions (see p. 13); visited the "Patient Defenders Village" featuring exhibitions on issue advocacy around the state; and blew off steam with friends and colleagues.

"Through the NYSNA convention, we are educated and we bring that education back to our community and our patients," said Charmayne Saddler-Walker, RN, of Interfaith



Medical Center. "We become a liaison full of information about healthcare for the community."

"Being a part of NYSNA is great because I know that there are people behind me who have my back and are in the same position as I am and feel my struggle," said Joanna Lavarino, RN, of Montefiore Weiler.

Empowered nurses

"This Convention is about the empowerment of nurses," said Paula Murphy-Rose, RN, a psychiatric ER nurse at Kings County Hospital in Rosedale. "We come to get information about the state of our country, about our rights, about healthcare, and we are strengthened by this information."

The convention culminated in the gathering of the voting body, a chance for members to cast their vote on proposed by-law changes.

As NYSNA looks to the work ahead, we are grateful to all who have stood with us in the fight for justice, equal opportunity, fair wages, safe staffing, and healthcare for all.

Part of a movement

"Every time I go to convention, I get stronger, more empowered to go back into my facility and keep on making changes," said Maria Silvers, RN, a quality management nurse in obstetrics at Metropolitan Hospital. "You have to feel like you're part of a movement, part of progress toward what you're working at."

"The atmosphere and the support from nurses all over really made me proud to be a NYSNA registered nurse," said Christine Luebcke, RN, of Interfaith Medical Center. "The conference touched on many important topics we face in nursing like staffing issues, safety for ourselves and our patients, and how to protect our license with POA. I look forward to attending again next year!"

"It's events like this that give people a greater understanding that it's not just one person, it's not just your hospital, it's actually a global movement," said Mohibullah Hussaini, RN, an ER nurse at Harlem Hospital.



Nurses from across the city and state celebrate together



Award to Guerline Mercredi, NP

The Phoebe Stein Award is given to someone who goes above and beyond in being supportive of our Child Life Program at CHAM [Children's Hospital at Montefiore]. This is first time in history that the Child Life Specialists have been able to pick the recipient for this award, and it was a unanimous decision to nominate Guerline Mercredi, NP, who received it in September.



Info picket at nursing home

NYSNA members caring for 300 nursing home patients carried out an informational picket on October 26. The Ozanam Hall Nursing Home in Bayside, Queens, employs 60 RNs who are demanding a say in patient health and safety through committees management so far has refused to sanction. Nurses also want an end to a six-year wage freeze.



// We share a mission with our Mayor. As nurses, by law, we are patient advocates. We defend and heal our patients. Mayor de Blasio is also an advocate. He works to keep all New Yorkers safe. That's why we support his re-election and will join a strong majority of New Yorkers voting to re-elect him on November 7."

**Judith Cutchin, RN,
President, NYSNA's NYC H+H/
Mayors Executive Council**

Allies in advocacy

We were thrilled to have three of our strongest allies in elected office speak at the 2017 NYSNA Convention. A raucous crowd cheered as New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City Public Advocate Letitia James and New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer donned "patient defender" shirts and addressed the room.

"A profound thank you—thank you to all of you for what you do all day and then what you do all night and every weekend as activists, as passionate leaders. This union inspires me," said Mayor de Blasio.

The personal is political

De Blasio has long fought to put patient care before private sector profits. In this first term, fair contracts have been awarded to members in both the public and private sector. He embraces our belief that conditions are fundamentally connected to healthcare. So he has moved forward to plan and build affordable housing, stood for the Fight for \$15 and gave support to Dr. Mary Bassett, Commissioner, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, whose work has delved into the disparities in care as a result of economic and racial inequality.

"The personal is political," he said. "You understand that so powerfully. You have to bring into your life everything you do. This is one of the strongest, most active unions anywhere."

Give thanks to nurses

"Right now, Washington is doing everything they can to roll back the healthcare of our people," said Comptroller Stringer, who has worked to improve access to prenatal care for pregnant women in New York and fought for pay equity. As Comptroller, Stringer has also expressed his support for New York City public hospitals, publishing a report in 2015 on the threat to public hospitals from cuts in Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds.

"In the last year, we've seen a new type of challenge emerge," warned Public Advocate James, "with a federal government more and more motivated to strip resources, deny health coverage, and hurt the most vulnerable." A longtime champion of healthcare for all, James stood with NYSNA when Interfaith Medical Center and Long Island College Hospital were faced with closure. She was instrumental in stopping the privatization of chronic dialysis clinics at four NYC H+H hospitals. And no one can forget

the support James gave at North Central Bronx Hospital, when the Labor and Delivery Unit was closed. An outcry ensued, with her strong backing and presence on site, and the Unit was reopened.

Stringer, James and de Blasio made sure to give thanks to nurses for all the work we've done to advocate for our patients. "So many people in this room have spent a lifetime fighting for the next generation, and I want to salute you today," said Stringer.

Beyond the bedside

"You have truly taken the call to advocate beyond the bedside to heart," said James. "President Obama once said that American nurses are the beating heart—and I would say the soul—of our healthcare system, not only in New York, but across this nation."

"I remember," she added, "when my mother was dying. You held my hand. You held me close. And that's why I will always, always stand with you."

NYSNA will continue to stand with our allies in government to advocate for patients and protect all New Yorkers' right to access to quality affordable healthcare. As Mayor de Blasio said, "We've got a lot more to do, but I know with NYSNA leading the way we will become a better city, a better state, and a better nation."



NYC's Mayor Bill de Blasio, Public Advocate Letitia James and Comptroller Scott Stringer join hands in solidarity with NYSNA

Together we fight, together we win

Nurses weren't the only powerhouse union members at the NYSNA Convention this October. Joining the 1,200 RNs at the Javits Center were representatives and leaders from some of our nation's most influential labor unions who came to show their solidarity.

As lunch wound down on Day Two of the 2017 NYSNA Convention, the Labor Rally began and the energy in the room turned electric.

Chris Shelton, the International President of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), was first on stage. Speaking to a packed room, he got straight to the point: "You're an unbelievable fighting force that can't be beat," he began. "And you're gonna make New York the second state in the country to pass comprehensive safe staffing legislation," he continued, to loud cheers and applause.

Strong unions

Estela Vasquez, RN, Executive Vice President of 1199SEIU, our country's largest healthcare union, stepped up next to raise awareness about how union solidarity can protect our nation's most vulnerable. "America is strong when we have strong unions, when we have a strong working class, when we respect immigrants, and when we don't hold DACA Dreamers hostage. We are the ones making America strong!"

Now more than ever, labor unions must unite in the fight for good jobs, social justice, equal opportunity, and healthcare for all. Between the 10 unions gathered at the convention, a collective force of 4,000,000 union members were represented, standing together on the issues that matter most.

Martha Kuhl, RN, Secretary Treasurer from National Nurses United acknowledged that especially in this political climate the fight for labor is difficult, "We are under attack because we have the power to threaten and challenge the fundamental errors in our society," she said.

The President of the Doctors Council/SEIU, Dr. Frank Proscia, echoed her sentiment, evoking cheering from the audience, "Don't give up, no matter how hard it gets. Keep fighting, keep pushing back!"



Estela Vasquez, RN, Executive Vice President, 1199SEIU

At the center of this year's fight for union rights is the controversial vote on a New York State Constitutional Convention, a referendum to rewrite and amend the New York State Constitution in 2019 (see p. 4). Jake LaMonda, President of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association and Jason Ide from Teamsters Local 814 both spoke to the importance of voting NO on Proposition 1, Constitutional Convention, on November 7. "The Constitutional Convention is there for one purpose," called out LaMonda, "and that's to take away the rights we have fought for. The most important thing we can do is vote *no*. Let's show New York that labor is alive and well!"

Impossible alone

Secretary-Treasurer of NYS AFL-CIO Terry Melvin wrapped up the rally by celebrating NYSNA nurses, reminding attendees, "You are the conscience and the moral compass. Nurses rock and nurses rule this state."

Other outstanding advocates for working people gave strong voice at Convention. Mario Cilento, President, NYS AFL-CIO was there, a steady voice of support for nurses



Chris Shelton, International President, Communications Workers of America



Mario Cilento, President, NYS AFL-CIO

and a presence at meetings, rallies and press conferences defending the role of labor and for safe staffing and single payer. Anthony Ciampa, RN, NYSNA Second Vice President, gave the "Solidarity Award" to Vincent Alvarez, President, NYC Central Labor Council—for his commitment to the city's workers and helping keep New York a "union city." President Alvarez is an outstanding advocate and has also been forthright in his denunciation of the Constitutional Convention and the forces of cynicism seeking to pass and hijack it this year.

Nina Turner, former State Senator from Ohio, dazzled our members with her special brand of inspiration. She called for action in the face of a national politics of hate and divisiveness. This was her second appearance seen by our members, as she attended a single payer conference in January with the same energy and effect.

NYSNA members know that protecting our patients requires advocacy beyond the bedside. We also know that the fight for guaranteed healthcare is impossible alone. That's why every day we join with and support our labor brothers and sisters. We've got a lot of work to do, but when we fight together, we win.

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Vincent Alvarez, President, NYC Central Labor Council



Martha Kuhl, RN, Secretary Treasurer, National Nurses United



Terry Melvin, Secretary-Treasurer, NYS AFL-CIO



Frank Proscia, President, Doctors Council/SEIU



Jason Ide, President, Teamsters Local 814



Jake LaMonda, President, Uniformed Fire Officers

HARLEM FORUM

Defending public hospitals

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in central Harlem is renowned world-wide. It sits across from Harlem Hospital, one of 11 hospitals that comprise the New York City Health and Hospitals system. It was the setting for a forum on October 20 that drew more than 200 nurses, doctors, public health experts and community members for whom a persistent threat to this system invokes a battle cry.

For good reason. This system served one in five NYC residents last year, providing more than five million inpatient and clinic visits. The doors are open to all in need. Its share of visits is growing this year. The H+H system is the most important healthcare resource in NYC.

NYSNA was joined in sponsoring the forum by the National Action Network, the NAACP, Doctors Council/SEIU, the Commission for the Public's Health System, New York Immigration Coalition, Community Voices Heard, and CWA – Local 1180. Nine panelists, mostly drawn from these organizations, presented at the Forum.

New report a central focus

Two policy experts, Barbara Caress and James Parrot, produced a report (distributed at the event and available on the NYSNA website, www.nysna.org), "On Restructuring the NYC Health+Hospitals Corporation," that makes the case in great detail that the public system operates with efficiency and cost control,

with high quality and outcomes. While providing care throughout NYC (Staten Island excepted), the public system is especially important in underserved areas where it is the only health resource available. Communities of color rely heavily on the public system. And for the uninsured and undocumented immigrants, its service is critical.

The five major private health systems in NYC also rely on the public system. The five, whose revenues were just short of \$900 million in 2016, almost 50% higher than in 2015, are known for an unwillingness to care for patients who provide little or no profit. "H+H hospitals," wrote Daily News reporter Ginger Otis on September 29 in a review of the report, "effectively subsidize the profitability of the city's private hospitals."

Those conclusions were echoed in opening remarks at the forum by Judith Cutchin, RN, a Woodhull Hospital nurse and President, NYSNA's H+H/Mayorals Executive Council. "Give credit where credit is due," she told the audience. "And that is with the public hospital system. We need to level this playing field and address this very unfortunate inequality whereby a much-needed public system fails to be adequately funded."



(far left) Judith Cutchin, RN, President NYSNA's H+H/Mayorals Executive Council, sits next to Anne Bové, RN, her predecessor at the Executive Council, speaking from the perspective of their many years as nurses in the public system. A panel of public health, medical and hospital workers joined them on stage.

Five years since the flood

Superstorm Sandy hit NYC and surrounding areas on October 29, 2012, and memories of its frightening consequences remain fresh today. Hurricane Sandy was the deadliest and most destructive of the 2012 Atlantic hurricane season. Early on October 29, Sandy curved west-northwest and then moved ashore near Brigantine, NJ, as a *post-tropical cyclone* with hurricane-force winds.

As it roared into NYC, smashing homes in , NJ, on Staten Island and in Queens, and on Long Island, floods engulfed lower Manhattan,

even knocking out back up power at Bellevue Hospital. The surge level at Battery Park in New York topped 13.88, surpassing the old record of 10.02 feet, set by Hurricane Donna in 1960. New York Harbor's surf reached a record level when a buoy measured a 32.5-foot wave.

Sandy was a killer

Our members spent days on shift at hospitals, working under extreme conditions, to protect patients, as floods persisted for days. The death toll directly attributed to Sandy in New York was 48.

For the first time in its more than 150-year history, NYC's oldest hospital was forced to evacuate.

Through the extraordinary diligence of our members and other caregivers, no patient was harmed during the evacuation, including babies in the NICU. These were among the memories shared at Bellevue at a gathering on October 24.

Scientists agree that human-caused climate change amplified the impacts of Superstorm Sandy. One reason we can draw this conclusion is that sea levels around the NYC area are now close to 1 foot higher than they were a century ago. It is not just in NY. Global warming has added to sea levels across the globe.

As nurses, we are speaking out against climate change and the global warming that results from excessive CO2. For our patients, and for our earth, this issue remains of the highest priority.



Registered nurses Gail Lynah, Daphne Bramble (now retired but worked through Sandy), and Lumita Papadopol



In the company of heroes

The NYSNA Convention was a great chance to thank all of the exceptional nurses, organizers, and patient advocates at NYSNA who have made real, positive change happen for their colleagues and communities.

This year's NYSNA Award winners are:

Tough as Nails Award: Marion Enright, RN

Nathan Littauer Hospital Management was determined to keep nurses from winning a good contract. Marion never backed down. Year after year, she kept Nathan nurses united and finally, they won!

Solidarity Across Oceans Award: Teresa Schloth, RN

The big dialysis providers cut care to boost their profits. Nurses at Fresenius dialysis centers decided to fight back. Fresenius is based in Germany, so we took the fight there. Teresa traveled to Germany to unite with Fresenius workers there who were on strike. Today, Fresenius nurses have a stronger contract.

"In the Eye of the Storm" Award: Marion Perkins, RN

Marion has dedicated her life to helping people hurt by natural disasters. She attended both of NYSNA's medical missions this year to Guatemala and the Philippines, and is an exemplary role model.

Outstanding Political and Community Advocate: Flandersia Jones, RN

This year we put everything on the line to save healthcare in this country. Every step of the way, Flandersia was on the front lines—at the Women's March, talking to candi-

dates who wanted our endorsement, as a Lobby leader for Safe Staffing and the New York Health Act. She is a model of what advocacy should be.

The Case Manager Organizers: Phyllis Beck, RN; Donna Magrone, RN; Melissa DeFazio Furino, RN

One in four workers who try to bring a union to their workplace end up fired. It takes a particularly brave person to organize a union. Phyllis, Donna, and Melissa put their jobs on the line to bring case managers into NYSNA—and they won.

Exceptional Advocates:

Our advocacy doesn't stop when we're not at the bedside. Sometimes we have to take our advocacy to the legislature and to the streets. These exceptional advocates did just that and more:

From the Catskills, **Karen Faraci, RN**, is a true champion for health-care for all—especially women and children.

In NYC, **Jaiveer Grewal, RN**, **Carlene Jones, RN** and **Xenia Greene, RN** have taken the lead on building up our union by going unit-to-unit to talk to nurses, recruit leaders, and encourage activism.

On Long Island, **Marianne Walsh, RN** and **Tracy Kosciuk, RN** are fierce advocates for better staffing and stronger contracts.

In Central New York, **Donna Maccarone, RN** is building a unified bargaining unit that gets results and connects with the community.

From the Lower Hudson Valley, **Anna Marie Perkins, RN** has given years of dedicated service to both the Nyack Hospital LBU and NYSNA as a whole.

In Buffalo, **Heather Scott, RN** works every day to get new nurses involved in our union and help

build our power at Erie County Medical Center.

In Plattsburgh, **Katherine Tarasavage, RN** is the Contract Action Team coordinator and helped oversee the strong new contract at Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital.

Public Sector Defender Award: Patricia James, RN

Our public hospitals are under attack, and we have stepped up to defend them. Patricia is one of our most dedicated defenders. When she sees our practice in danger, she stands her ground.

When she sees the mission of our hospitals in danger, she stands her ground. Patricia is dedicated to her family, her patients, and her professional colleagues.

Persistence Award: Westchester Medical Center RNs

Back in 2012, Westchester Medical Center nurses began a fight that would take years. When management announced apocalyptic staffing cuts and outsourcing, nurses stood strong and, over time, have forced management to improve staffing. This year, they won a strong new contract that achieves some of the highest RN wages in the nation!

Courage Award: Joan Bruce, RN and all the nurses of Bronx-Lebanon Hospital

When a gunman opened fire at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital earlier this year, nurses, doctors and aides rushed in to help. Under fire, they put their lives on the line to save lives. And that's what they did. Our hearts go out to those who lost a colleague, friend, patient or loved one that day.



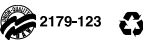
Flandersia Jones, RN, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital (l) with Marva Wade, RN, NYSNA First Vice President

Our public hospitals are under attack, and we have stepped up to defend them. Patricia is one of our most dedicated defenders. When she sees our practice in danger, she stands her ground.



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