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## RNs Hold Out Hope for Meeting to Avoid Strike

### *Nurse Negotiating Committee Will Not Issue Strike Notice Before April 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting*

(Altoona, PA) – Nurses want a say at Altoona Regional Health System, not a strike, and hope an upcoming meeting will move toward a resolution that will avoid a strike at their two hospitals, Altoona Hospital and Bon Secours.

“Our goal is no different today than it was last year when we decided to form a union: To improve our hospital – for nurses, for patients, and for our community,” said Bonnie Franciosi, a registered nurse in the operating room at Altoona Hospital. “Our goal has never been to strike. That is the last thing we want to do. Our primary concern has always been patient care. And our goal has been to gain a strong voice for nurses so we could raise concerns and see results.”

On March 17, nurses voted by 82% to reject a final contract offer and authorize the bargaining committee to send a notice of a potential strike.

A meeting between the leadership of the Board of Directors and the nurses is scheduled for April 3. The nurse committee announced that they will not issue the strike notice before that meeting.

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“We want to do everything we can to provide an opportunity at that meeting to avoid a strike and reach an agreement that improves our hospital for our patients and our community,” said Franciosi.

Among the contract issues that are still unresolved are mandatory overtime, nurse-to-patient staffing ratios, and a strong voice for nurses including “Union” or “Agency” shop.

“We formed our union because the leadership of our hospital did not listen to use when we raised concerns. They didn’t trust our judgment or respect our experience. We needed to have a strong, effective voice in order to advocate for our patients and our profession. Make no mistake about it, the registered nurses are SEIU and SEIU is the registered nurses,” said Barb Garland, RN, who works in the recovery room at Altoona Hospital.

“These issues weren’t new. For 30 years nurses at Altoona Hospital and Bon Secours had tried many different methods to try to work with our administration to address our concerns. But they didn’t listen,” said Garland.

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*For more information about the ARHS RN issues, go to:*

[www.SupportAltoonaNurses.org](http://www.SupportAltoonaNurses.org).

*SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania is the state’s largest and fastest-growing union of nurses and other health care workers, representing nearly 8,000 RNs and over 20,000 employees in hospitals, nursing homes, home care, and state facilities. For more information go to*

[www.seihealthcarepa.org](http://www.seihealthcarepa.org)