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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Members Show Overwhelming Support for Altoona RNs

Hundreds of Members of the Community Rallied to Protect Patient Care and Respect Nurses at ARHS

(Altoona, PA) – Over 250 members of the Altoona community came out to the Fairview United Methodist Church to show their support for the RN’s who are working to negotiate a contract at Altoona Regional Health System. They included nurses, doctors, families, clergy, and workers from throughout the area who are committed to excellent patient care at ARHS. The tremendous response demonstrated the need to settle a contract that values nurses, protects patient care, and gives nurses a strong voice at the hospitals.

“I am overwhelmed by this level of support from everyone in the community. We are proud of the work we do at ARHS and want to provide everybody with the best care possible, we owe them that for the support they have given us,” said Beth Trexler, RN, in Tower 10 at the Altoona Campus, and a member of the nurses negotiating committee. “With this incredible level of solidarity from our friends and neighbors, I am confident that we can work a contract that truly respects nurses, protects patients, and gives this community the excellent care that they deserve.”

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(MORE)

Around 750 registered nurses at Bon Secours Hospital and Altoona Hospital voted to form a union with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare Pennsylvania last May, and have been negotiating their first union contract for the past six months.

Nurses are standing up for a contract that:

- ✓ Values Care -- Safe nurse staffing is critical for quality patient care. ARHS should agree to a contract that provides nurses an equal voice in setting and monitoring safe staffing levels and the highest quality of care.
- ✓ Values Nurses -- Nurses' wages at Altoona Regional Health System lag far behind other unionized hospitals in the region and in similar communities across the state. ARHS should be a leader in quality by raising wages to recruit and retain experienced nursing staff.
- ✓ Provides an Effective Voice for Nurses in Decisions that Impact their Patients and their Community – Over 500 nurses at ARHS hospitals signed petitions and voted by an 82% majority in support of a strong voice for nurses and their union, including a contract that includes a closed “union shop.”

“This community deserves to have excellent care in their time of need, and the best way to do that is for the nurses to have a strong voice at the hospital,” said Beth Trexler, RN, in Tower 10 at the Altoona Campus.

“We formed a union because nurses are on the front lines of patient care every single day and we want to use our experience to ensure that this community gets the same level of support that they have given us. That is

why we are committed to negotiating a strong contract that respects nurses and values patient care.”

-- 30 --

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.seiuhealthcarepa.org