



For Immediate Release – October 2, 2017

DCNA Votes “No Confidence” in United Medical Center’s Leadership

On September 28th, DCNA United Medical Center membership voted “no-confidence” in United Medical Center (UMC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Luis Hernandez, and Executive Vice President of Patient Care Service & Chief Nursing Officer, Ms. Maribel Torres. Mr. Hernandez was appointed as CEO of UMC in 2016 and Ms. Torres has been Chief Nursing Officer since 2013.

DCNA continuously expressed concerns with Ms. Torres and Mr. Hernandez of the dangerous nurse-patient ratios, the lack of proper equipment in the units and inadequate training for the nurses. DCNA met with Ms. Torres numerous times since 2014 demanding that management address unsafe nurse-patient ratios, proper equipment and other safety issues. She ignored DCNA’s demands and even defended the unsafe policies and practices. In 2016, DCNA met with Mr. Hernandez to discuss the same concerns and he also ignored DCNA. DCNA took their concerns to the D.C. Council and testified before the Committee on Health at least six times regarding the unsafe nurse-patient ratios and other safety concerns. Ms. Torres finally responded with a notice of a brief change in nurse-patient ratios after the management was questioned by D.C. Council Committee on Health Chairman Vincent C. Gray during a UMC Oversight Hearing in March 2017. However, several weeks later UMC decreased the amount of nurses, reverting to unsafe levels. Overall, the UMC leadership under Mr. Hernandez and Ms. Torres has consistently ignored the safety concerns of the nurses.

As stated during the September 22, 2017 Committee on Health hearing, as far back as March 2017, DC Department of Health’s (DOH) Director, Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt warned Mr. Hernandez and Ms. Torres of concerns relating to UMC’s obstetrics and nursery care services. However, Mr. Hernandez, Ms. Torres or any other management official ever informed DCNA or the nurses of any DOH’s concerns and management initiated no changes in safety practices.

During the August 2017 90-day license restriction of UMC’s obstetrics and nursery care services, Ms. Torres was functioning as the manager of the obstetrics and nursery care unit. To date, DCNA is aware of no action taken against Ms. Torres for her leadership over a unit that has been temporarily closed for “deficiencies in screening, clinical assessment and delivery protocol.”

It is clear that neither Mr. Hernandez nor Ms. Torres is committed to quality patient care for United Medical Center. Accordingly, they should be asked to resign from their positions or face immediate termination.

DCNA is an affiliate of the National Nurses United, AFL-CIO. DCNA is a full-service professional organization and labor union solely dedicated to representing health care professionals in the District of Columbia. With over 2,000 members, DCNA advances the health care profession by fostering high standards of practice, promoting the economic and general welfare of employees in the workplace and lobbying District officials regarding health care issues. DCNA represents over 200 nurses at UMC.

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