



GWUH Nurses File Election Petition With Labor Board to Unionize

Citing concerns over safety, workload and staff treatment, frontline nurses at The George Washington University Hospital in Washington, D.C. filed a petition for a union election.

The nurses at The George Washington University Hospital (GWUH) are partnering with the District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA), which already represents nurses at several D.C. hospitals, including Children’s National Hospital and Howard University Hospital. They are filing for a union election, having successfully gained a majority of support among nursing staff. GWUH employs approximately 750 registered nurses, and is owned and operated by Universal Health Services, Inc. (UHS), which is the 6th largest for-profit healthcare company in the United States.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) will now seek an election agreement between DCNA and GWUH and set details for the election. DCNA has requested that the NLRB conduct the election as soon as possible due to high nurse turnover rates.

Throughout the United States, nurses have been increasingly unwilling to endanger their licenses by working in hospitals that fail to address staffing needs or to provide safe and healthy work environments. GWUH administration has inadequately responded to staffing challenges. Efforts to retain nursing staff have been insufficient and the hospital has struggled to recruit nurses at the rate at which experienced nurses are leaving the bedside. As a result, many units have been chronically short-staffed, leading to increased burnout and raising the likelihood of poor patient outcomes.

Hospital leadership has rejected previous attempts by nurses to foster meaningful change through collaboration, and existing issues have been further compounded by profit-driven corporate mandates. GWUH’s depleted workforce is being stretched beyond reasonable limits, and hospital leadership has repeatedly ignored concerns regarding patient safety. The rapid growth of this union organizing campaign demonstrates the critical need for change and how eager nurses are to see conditions improve.

UHS has a tremendous opportunity and a moral obligation to collaborate with its strong team of impassioned and highly motivated nurses, who are resolutely seeking to partner with administration to make GWUH a true leader in healthcare. As one organizer states, “We are all here because of a deep sense of purpose and a genuine desire to serve our community. We’re not making unreasonable demands – we just want the tools we need to do our jobs well, have a sustainable work-life balance, and provide our patients with the high-quality care they deserve. We are fighting for what should be common goals.”