



For immediate release

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DCNA Joins Nurses Throughout the United States on January 13th to Demand Action to Address the Staffing Crisis

DCNA members at Howard University Hospital will join registered nurse members of National Nurses United (NNU) in actions across the country on Thursday, Jan. 13 to demand the hospital industry invest in safe staffing and to demand that nurses receive optimal protections at work.

The District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions are experiencing a shortage of nurses willing to risk their licenses or the safety of their patients by working under the unsafe conditions imposed on them by employers. Unfortunately, employers are creating new standards of care and staffing levels because of the pandemic, which results in decreasing the proper level of care patients.

Eileen Shaw, RN, Treasurer, DCNA Board of Directors, and Chairperson of DCNA/HU-HUH, stated that “far too often I have received complaints from nurses who are assigned too many patients for them to provide the proper amount of time and care to all their patients. Nurses are also being pushed by supervisors to come to work even when they are sick; some of these nurses have come to work, only to have to leave because of illness. Employers need to immediately hire more nurses and assistive personnel in every unit and on every shift to ensure a safe work environment in which we can do what we are trained to do – provide compassionate and expert care to each patient.”

According to a recent survey of thousands of nurses in the United States, four out of five said at least half of their shifts were unsafely staffed. When nurses are assigned too many patients to safely care for at once, the patients are at an increased risk for preventable medical errors,

avoidable complications, increased length of stay, readmissions, and even death. Assigning nurses too many patients to safely care for at once also leads to ongoing moral distress and job dissatisfaction.

RNs say nurses would stop leaving the profession if hospitals immediately improved working conditions by hiring more staff. According to nurses, hospitals must: actively hire permanent staff nurses; consider a wider range of educational qualifications; stop canceling nurses; and properly cross-train current staff nurses so that they are competent to work in other departments, especially critical care.

Local actions will take place at the following locations on Jan. 13:

Howard University Hospital

2041 Georgia Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20059

8:30 – 10:30 am

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.