

# Healthcare Worker Strike Averted!

*Members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East Overwhelmingly Vote To Ratify Contract*



GLOVERSVILLE, NY, UNITED STATES,

November 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After months of protracted bargaining, healthcare workers at Nathan Littauer Hospital and Nursing Home, members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, ratified a new contract agreement. The hospital and nursing home workers had been in contract negotiations with management since May; their contract, which was set to expire on June 30, was extended twice, and expired on October 31, 2023. On Monday, November 6, the workers gave their employer a 20-day notice to strike, which was rescinded when a tentative agreement was reached on November 17.

Greg Speller, Executive Vice President, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East said, "These dedicated healthcare workers united and fought hard to preserve and maintain their comprehensive health benefits. They also protected their pension, and secured annual wage increases and bonuses so they can take care of their own families at the same time they care for their community."

Health insurance was a priority for the 1199SEIU members who depend on their comprehensive 1199SEIU National Benefit Fund health insurance. The reasoning was two-fold; healthcare workers, especially, must be healthy to do their jobs, and also, in these times of staff shortages, healthcare institutions cannot recruit and maintain workers without providing comprehensive and affordable health insurance.

The National Benefit Fund is among the strongest and largest labor-management funds in the nation, providing comprehensive benefits to about 400,000 working and retired healthcare industry workers—members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East—and their families.

"We said from the get-go that our goal was a contract that would help retain and recruit qualified healthcare workers and we achieved that. All healthcare workers need comprehensive health benefits, a stable pension and good wages, which allows us to take care of our families at the same time we care for others. That's a win-win for the entire community," said Rachel Ortega, a Sterile Processing Tech and member of the union Negotiating Committee.

Pamela VanAvery, a PCT in the Operating Room and 1199 Negotiating Committee member said,

"This contract fight was a long haul and it wasn't easy, so I am more than grateful that I'm starting the Thanksgiving holiday without the worry of losing my health insurance. We were clear from the start that it was critical we maintained our health benefits, so that we can be healthy when taking care of our sick, injured and vulnerable patients."

#### Contract Highlights:

- Contract Duration

July 1, 2023—June 30, 2026

- The collective bargaining agreement not only preserves the members' National Benefit Fund, but also, locks in health insurance premiums for the duration of the 3-year contract.

- Members will receive a ratification bonus, and annual across the board wage increases throughout the duration of the 3-year contract.

- Member pensions are protected.

- On-Call pay is improved.

- New experience pay provisions will help recruit and retain staff.

- A new contract article states that if Nathan Littauer proposes a change of ownership or control with another entity, Nathan Littauer is required to notify the union within 30 days of the filing of the Certificate of Need (CON).

"I'm relieved that our health insurance is secure and that the cost is locked in for the next three years. I love the work I do, but honestly, I would have had no choice other than to leave Nathan Littauer, if management had not agreed to protect our health benefits," said Andrea Fagan, a Physical Therapy Assistant at the Nursing Home and also a committee member.

The bargaining unit includes 305 hospital and nursing home workers who are technical and service employees; licensed practical nurses; certified nursing assistants; environmental services, dietary, and food service workers; orderlies; maintenance mechanics; laboratory, pharmacy, clinical, respiratory, diagnostic imaging and surgical technicians, engineering staff and others.

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in New York and nationwide. We represent over 450,000 members throughout New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, Florida, and Washington, D.C. Our mission is to achieve quality care and good jobs for all.

#### Media Contact:

Mindy Berman

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

518 229-468

[mindyb@1199.org](mailto:mindyb@1199.org)

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