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Dave Bates (347) 865-8038
dave.bates@1199.org
Chelsea-Lyn Rudder
(646) 413-2223
ChelseaLyn.Rudder@1199.org
CareForNY.org #WeCareForNY

Amnesty International Backs Nurses & Caregivers Standing Up For Quality Care & Good Jobs

Caregivers head into negotiations with employers today as master contract affecting over 110,000 healthcare workers at over 100 hospitals and nursing homes nears July 15 expiration

New York City- Amnesty International Executive Director Steven W. Hawkins joined nurses and healthcare workers at Mt. Sinai Medical Center for their picketing yesterday, and pledged the support of Amnesty's 3 million activists.

"Workers' rights are human rights. Fair pay is a human right. Equity is a human right. And quality healthcare benefits are a human right," said Hawkins. "Amnesty International stands with 1199SEIU and the 110,000 nurses and caregivers in negotiations. We demand dignity for healthcare workers as they care for our families and communities."

"The healthcare workers of 1199 have always had a larger mission to advocate for social justice, so we are deeply honored to have the backing of the world's pre-eminent human rights organization, Amnesty International," said 1199SEIU President George Gresham. "We have stood side by side with Amnesty for the rights of women, people of color, workers, immigrants, youth and the LGBT community. Now we look forward to working with our sisters and brothers in Amnesty to protect quality healthcare and good jobs for all New Yorkers."

On Wednesday, June 18, tens of thousands of nurses and caregivers held protests for quality care and good jobs at 100 facilities throughout the New York City area. The "informational picket lines" at hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and other facilities mark the launch of an effort to educate patients and the public about healthcare CEOs who are severely threatening the quality of healthcare services and jobs for New Yorkers.

The nurses and healthcare workers of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East have been in master contract negotiations with the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes, the employer group representing most private hospitals, nursing homes and clinics in downstate New York. In negotiations, employers have been threatening radical changes to caregivers' health benefits which could result in massive cuts for 55,000 lower-wage workers and future cuts for over 110,000 total members. Quality healthcare depends on healthy caregivers, so these cuts could put patients and public health at risk. Employers are also threatening the economic health of communities by opening many outpatient facilities with sub-standard, non-union jobs. Meanwhile, the top five health systems had over \$20 billion in revenues last year.

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1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in New York and the nation. We represent over 250,000 healthcare workers in New York State, and over 400,000 total members throughout the East Coast. Our mission is to achieve quality care and good jobs for all.