Executive Summary

TAMC is committed to providing exceptional patient care, and will continue to do so, uninterrupted, for the duration of the MSNA strike.

- As part of the National Nurses United (NNU), the MSNA often has a national agenda for which they advocate. TAMC is focused on local solutions that are specific to what’s happening in our hospital and in our community.

- Patient safety is always TAMC’s first priority. We provide high-quality, safe care. We have been recognized many times for the care we provide, including our recent Leapfrog recognition as an A-rated hospital. (The Leapfrog Group is a national nonprofit organization which assigns letter grades (A, B, C, D or F) to hospitals based upon patient safety results.)

- TAMC values the excellent care and service our nurses and all of our employees deliver each and every day. We look forward to reaching a new agreement with the union that recognizes our nurses for their important contributions, while allowing us to maintain our ability to equally recognize other clinical and support staff, and to serve as good stewards of our overall healthcare dollars.

What’s Happening Now

TAMC received a strike notice from MSNA/NNU for 6:45 a.m. on July 22 through 6:44 a.m. on July 24.

- TAMC will continue to care for our patients as we always do. Patient care services at TAMC will not be interrupted by the MSNA’s decision to strike.

- TAMC has been working with a national staffing company to bring in highly qualified, temporary replacement nurses to ensure our patients are provided with safe, high quality nursing care. These nurses will work alongside TAMC nurses who choose to continue to work during the strike.

Nursing Union Background

TAMC’s staff nurses are members of NNU, the largest nursing union in United States history.

- The Maine State Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United represents more than 185,000 nurses in every state. The national agenda of the union is often apparent in local negotiations. TAMC is focused on local topics that impact healthcare in the communities we serve.

- Mandatory staffing ratios for nursing are one of the NNU’s national agenda items. Strikes are planned by this union in other states on this same issue. Hospitals continue to resist the addition of staffing ratio language in union contracts because it is inflexible and does not take into account each of the many variables necessary in determining appropriate staffing. Like many other hospitals, TAMC prefers an approach which considers each of these necessary variables.
- TAMC appreciates the important role that nurses provide in patient care. This care directly impacts patient safety, outcomes, and satisfaction. That’s why TAMC follows national standards when staffing the hospital, and is also why our nurse leaders make adjustments based upon both patient needs and the skills and experience of the entire care team. Mandatory staffing ratios do not take into consideration patient needs, acuity, volume, and other variables. Nursing leaders will continue to seek input from our Professional Practice Committee comprised of staff nurses and nurse leaders, and work directly with nurses to alleviate individual concerns. Our patients are our top priority and we are committed to maintaining a staffing approach that is both responsive and flexible.

**Negotiation Update & Issues**

**TAMC and the nurses’ union have thus far met seven times in negotiation sessions.**

- Tentative agreements have been reached on 16 proposals; however, a small number of issues remain outstanding.

- TAMC recognizes that our nurses work hard, as do all employees in our organization. Nursing is a profession that requires commitment, hard work and dedication. We are continuing negotiations with the union to ultimately come to an agreement that is in the best interest of our patients, our nurses and the organization as a whole.

**The issue on which TAMC and the union are farthest apart is wages.**

- TAMC has offered wage increases of 2% plus steps (2% average) in addition to a 1% market adjustment. This means that the majority of TAMC nurses will receive a total wage increase of approximately 5% for each of the 3 proposed years of the contract.

- The wages for nurses at TAMC are very competitive within our region.

**The union is advocating that understaffing leads to overworked nurses and compromised patient care quality at TAMC.**

- TAMC is proud to be recognized nationally for the quality care we provide to our patients.

- TAMC is in full agreement with the union that safe staffing is of utmost importance to achieve high quality care. As a result, nurse leaders and frontline staff have collaborated to trial an “acuity tool” to help determine safe staffing based upon the many important factors involved.

- TAMC has offered similar safe staffing contract language that the MSNA has accepted at other hospitals within the state.

- TAMC has quality and safety committees (with membership consisting of physicians, nurses, administrators, and a member of the public) that look at specific clinical quality indicators.

- TAMC reports its quality data to several organizations that rank hospital quality, including:
  - The Leapfrog Group; the data is reported at leapfroggroup.org. TAMC receives an “A” patient safety score.
  - Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); the data is reported on hospitalcompare.gov.

- There is a process in place at TAMC for any nurse who believes there is an unsafe working condition to bring his or her concerns to leadership’s attention.