

Ashley Tineo

Professor M.I. Cipriani, Ph.D

Unit 1 Project

March 6, 2023

**Nurses With Low Pay Affect All of Us**

*Fellow nurse association of NYS:*

As an aspiring nurse who sees the unfair and unjust treatment of NYC nurses, I feel compelled to raise my voice. It is a challenging endeavor for many of us to become nurses, physician assistants, or doctors. Now that I am a student trying to enter the program, I can attest to its difficulty. Every student has their own background and responsibilities outside of school, so incorporating classes is difficult. Since the nursing program is extremely competitive, it is strongly recommended to receive higher than a 3.0 GPA. In addition, you must pass an ATI exam. If you are accepted, you cannot fail a class more than twice because you may not continue in the program.

What many CUNY students struggle with as well is not receiving financial aid. The classes they are taking cost thousands of dollars out of pocket. If that is not challenging enough, imagine graduating, thinking it is all worth it, getting a job, then not getting paid sufficiently. Nurses save lives, work 12–15-hour shifts, and are selfless. They deserve more than the bare minimum. I fear that my dedication, hard work, and accomplishments will all be for nothing. For working 12–15-hour shifts with minimal breaks. For working harder because we are short-staffed. For receiving low checks and having to pay out of pocket for insurance because of my

job's refusal to provide it. Many of you oversee those in charge of scheduling these nurse shifts, deciding their hourly pay, and deciding what these nurses must do daily. I want you to put yourself in their shoes, understand what they experience, and consider a salary boost for our nurses.

How does paying nurses insufficiently affect everyone? Nurses understand the demanding work they do and are reaching their limits. This leads to strikes for raises, paid health insurance and fair treatment. Nurses on strike can lead to a staff shortage, inadequate patient care, overworking of other nurses and unsafe work environments. Most recently, during the protests that occurred at Mount Sinai and Montefiore, protestors were chanting "Safe staffing saves lives." The ratio of nurses to patients increased from 1:4 to 1:6, which is a safety issue for hospitals. Over seven-thousand nurses were on strike. This means there were 7,000 fewer nurses to help patients. This is all due to a managements neglect of a wage increase and proper care for nurses.

We should use what happened at Montefiore and Mount Sinai hospitals as an example. Finding replacements for those 7000 nurses was difficult. While their travel nurses accounted for some hospitals staff shortages, they did not appoint travel nurses to help in all departments. While it is appreciated that we have travel nurses, they are not as prepared to deal with hospital protocols as your long-term nurses are. It requires extra training for these travel nurses, and time we may not have. This creates an overwhelming environment for all staff. As we listen to the experiences of nurses in these hospitals, we hear nurses are assigned twelve patients per floor instead of the recommended four per floor. We may want to believe that we limit this issue to these two hospitals in the Bronx. However, it is a problem that occurs in all hospitals in New

York City. It is a waiting game for NYSNA to prepare for another strike. It affects the care of patients and the jobs of doctors. A shortage of staff leads to delays in elective procedures. Mount Sinai had to deal with transferring ICU infants to other hospitals in NYC.

It is possible to avoid this all from happening. It'll be for the best if we should ask our nurses to complete simple surveys regularly. As a result, we will be able to create a plan to solve the specific problems each hospital faces in order to fix them. Depending on the individual, some might not want a wage increase just to increase their health insurance, while others might need both. As a result of this survey, everyone can benefit by saving both time and money by participating in it. There needs to be a change and improvement in the systems set up for nurses, so let's make a change. They are all entitled to better quality of work than they have been given, regardless of whether or not they are recent graduates or have been working for years. There is a duty on your part to ensure that health insurance is available to all and that a shift is organized in a fair and just manner. There needs to be a proper nurse-to-patient ratio as well as an increase in the pay for all nurses. The way everything has been functioning in our hospitals will completely change because of this. Instead of allowing nurses to reach the point of striking and paying extra for travel nurses, we can use that money to ensure nurses want to work for you. This will ensure long-term staffing and prevent short staffing.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, I understand how difficult it is to deal with these ongoing strikes. That said, I am sure you will sympathize with your registered nurses, even if you are not one yourself. We all want to make sure that we and our loved ones are well-taken care of when we enter a hospital, whether we are patients or visitors. Let's not forget how grateful we were during the time of the pandemic for the challenging work of our nurses. Throughout the day, they

put themselves at risk of helping others, as they were first responders. There is no doubt that they deserve a raise in wages due to their hardships. It is all done by nurses. Doctors and patients rely on nurses for help and for their bedside manners. As I've mentioned before, a shortage of staff leads to cancellations in hospitals. As a result, a patient is denied something that can help them. In addition, doctors aren't paid for the day they don't get surgery. Hospitals and insurance companies lose out as a result. Taking this initiative to improve nurses' standing is beneficial to us all. I'm here to enlighten those who may not be aware of how significant nurses are to our community. I hope some have gained clarity on what we should do to improve our health system. I appreciate your attention today.

Sincerely,

Ashley Tineo

## **CITATIONS**

Otterman, Sharon, and Sean Piccoli. "Nurses Go on Strike at 2 New York City Hospitals." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 9 Jan. 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/09/nyregion/nurses-strike-nyc-hospitals.html>.

Democracy Now! "New York Nurses Strike for More Staff & Better Pay as Hospital CEOs Make Millions, Cut Charity Care." *Democracy Now!*, 11 Jan. 2023, [https://www.democracynow.org/2023/1/11/new\\_york\\_city\\_nurses\\_strike](https://www.democracynow.org/2023/1/11/new_york_city_nurses_strike).