

Striking nurses expose for-profit health care

written by John Parker
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Striking nurses speaking with SLL say, “We put everybody else before us.”

New York nurses are on strike. With 15,000 walking out on Monday, Jan. 12, this is the largest nurses’ strike in the city’s history. These nurses represent three different, privately owned hospital systems and are fighting back against hospital executives who have pushed them to the limit to squeeze out more profits – burning nurses out and endangering patients in the process.

On Jan. 11, John Parker with Struggle-La Lucha interviewed several nurses rallying outside NewYork-Presbyterian Allen Hospital. The following are excerpts.

John Parker: We’re from Struggle-La Lucha — can you tell us why you’re here?

Nurse 1: I’m here for better patient-to-nurse ratios. It means a lot. We need adequate staffing so we can properly care for them. That’s what we’re fighting for.

Nurse 2: I’m here for patient safety and safe staffing. We’re nurses and we cannot be spread so thin. They need adequate care.

John Parker: I had a stroke three years ago, and it took three months for me to get a neurologist, a cardiologist. And luckily I survived, but the health care system is so bad. And I know what they take away from you is being taken away from us too.

Nurse 2: Exactly.

John Parker: So, why do people call you heroes?

Nurse 2: Heroes? Because we put ourselves last. We put everybody else before us.

Nurse 3: We put our patients before our bladders!

Nurse 2: Before our tummies!

Nurses and patients deserve better. Union power can get us there.

John Parker is an organizer with the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles and the Struggle for Socialism Party.

