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## NEWS RELEASE



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### **ANA SUPPORTS STRIKING NURSES IN APPALACHIA**

**Silver Spring, MD** – American Nurses Association President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, showed her support for the striking nurses of Kentucky and West Virginia by visiting picket lines at four separate hospitals this week. President Patton traveled 600 miles over two days to demonstrate ANA’s solidarity with the striking nurses.

More than 800 nurses at nine hospitals owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) in Kentucky and West Virginia walked off the job Oct. 1, just after their contract expired. Nurses are calling on ARH to improve unsafe staffing practices and address mandatory overtime to allow nurses to provide the best possible patient care.

“This strike is not about money,” said Vicky Curry, a striking nurse in Harlan, Kentucky. “It is all about unsafe staffing.”

President Patton visited nurses in West Virginia and Kentucky and remarked, “I had the opportunity to speak with these nurses; they are walking the picket lines because their first concern is improving the quality of patient care.”



President Patton made the two day trip along with her mother, Mary Ellen Patton, RN. During her distinguished nursing career, Mary Ellen Patton was instrumental in forming the first bargaining unit for registered nurses Ohio at the Youngstown Unit where she served as President. She also served on ANA’s Board of Directors and has worked toward improving the general welfare of staff nurses. “The striking nurses of Kentucky,” Patton said, “are a courageous and committed group of nurses who must be commended by members of the health care industry for their multiple sacrifices in trying to ensure quality care for the public they serve.”

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The striking nurses are receiving support from labor and nursing organizations. The AFL-CIO and UAN have backed the striking nurses. They've set up a web site that allows people to donate funds in support of the nurses here; <https://secure.ga6>. ANA's Constituent Member Organizations in New York, Ohio, Oregon and Washington have pledged funds to offset the financial strains suffered during the work stoppage. The financial assistance will allow the

nurses to continue their struggle without fear of losing their homes or declaring bankruptcy. The Kentucky Nurses Association is also accepting donations of food and other supplies at their Louisville offices.

In addition to the financial support, nurses from across the country are providing moral support as well. They're arriving by bus and by car in Hazard and other picket lines. "It is wonderful, it's pepped everybody right up," commented Wilma Jones, President of KNA Local 104 in Hazard. "The feeling we get when we see nurses coming in from all over, it makes us feel so much better. Every little bit we get helps."

The community has also rallied behind the nurses' cause. On Monday, the Pike County Fiscal Court passed a resolution expressing disappointment with ARH leadership and its management of the ongoing nurses' strike. The resolution states "The Pike County Fiscal Court urges Appalachian Regional Healthcare to make every effort to resolve this matter as quickly as possible in order to provide the best health care for the citizens of Pike County, to restore order to our community, put our citizens back to work and to stop endangering the health of our citizens by providing a fair labor agreement for the Kentucky Nurses Association." Pike County is home to Williamson ARH.

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*The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.*