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**NEWS RELEASE**



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## **ANA and NYSNA Condemn Exploitation of Filipino Registered Nurses**

**Silver Spring, MD-** The American Nurses Association (ANA) and the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) today condemned the exploitation of immigrant RNs by unscrupulous U.S. employers and called for better enforcement of immigration laws.

They cited the case of 26 registered nurses from the Philippines who say they were brought to New York under false pretenses and denied the rights guaranteed by their employment contract. When the nurses resigned, they were sued by their former employer and accused of professional misconduct. On March 22, ten of the RNs were indicted in Suffolk County Supreme Court on charges of endangering their patients. Remarkably, the nurses' employment attorney was also indicted, for conspiracy; they all plead not guilty.

The nurses had been hired through a recruitment agency to work at specific nursing home facilities on Long Island. When they arrived in the U.S., they discovered they actually were working for another agency. Over a period of months, the nurses said, the agency refused to pay them according to the terms of their contracts. They also said they were not properly trained for their new jobs and were required to care for more patients than they believed was safe.

"This case may be just the tip of the iceberg. Nurses who come to the U.S. deserve to have their rights protected," said Tina Gerardi, RN, interim chief executive office of NYSNA. "Instead, these nurses were placed in the untenable position of being captive to an employer under conditions that did not allow them to provide safe patient care."

Gerardi said NYSNA became aware of the nurses' situation in May 2006 and assisted them in getting a hearing before the State Board for Nursing after the recruitment agency accused them of professional misconduct. "They couldn't get work because the issuance of their licenses was on hold pending investigation of an allegation of patient abandonment," Gerardi said. "Those charges were dismissed by the state board. We are greatly concerned these RNs are now being prosecuted for the same actions."

"The real patient endangerment lies in the deplorable conditions that led the nurses to leave. After exhausting all possibilities to resolve their concerns with the facility and the agency, the **(MORE)**

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nurses left without providing two weeks notice. These brave nurses deserve the nursing community's full support because they refused to remain in a situation where patients were being denied the kind of care and staffing they deserved," said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, RN, MSN, CNOR.

The nurses' plight has become a cause célèbre in both the Philippines and the New York City Filipino community. The RNs are expected to participate in the New York Philippine Independence Day parade on June 3, where they will receive support from both the Filipino and nursing communities.

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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.*

