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**WB General Nurse Anesthetists Request Union Recognition**

*19 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, who have risked their own lives for the sake of their patients during the recent COVID-19 surge even as their employment has been in turmoil, requested union recognition today from Capital Anesthesia Solutions.*

**Wilkes-Barre, PA --** On Wednesday, nineteen Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists at Wilkes-Barre General requested union recognition from Capital Anesthesia Solutions.

The CRNAs were laid off in August by their previous employer, North American Partners in Anesthesia, that left following a dispute with the hospital over unpaid bills.

Capital Anesthesia Solutions immediately took over anesthesia services at Wilkes-Barre General, Moses Taylor Hospital, and Regional Hospital of Scranton in August and immediately spread out the union members over three different worksites. Since the shuffling of staff has stopped, the CRNAs have dedicated themselves to restoring their union and fighting for improvements on the job.

Nancy Dines, vice president of the union local, said, “We had a union before, and it helped us keep our jobs when other anesthetists were forced to leave with the last company. Non-union anesthetists had a restrictive covenant our union did not agree to. Now we can advocate for ourselves as a group. It helps ensure fairness and structure to our employment situation while so much is changing in healthcare.”

As the nurse anesthetists intubated desperately ill COVID-19 patients, kept operating and procedural rooms running, and provided anesthesia to birthing mothers, they were forced to reapply for their jobs and take a cut in pay.

The CRNAs now receive a salary instead of wages and are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and that law’s guarantee of time and one half for overtime after 40 hours worked. Under Capital, they are offered a lesser per diem rate to come in for extra shifts while staffing has decreased from previous levels in an attempt to cut payroll costs and raise profits.

**Today, the CRNAs requested voluntary union recognition from Capital Anesthesia Solutions.**

Ann Marie Macikas, President of WV CRNAA , said, “Forming a union is the best way for us to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients, protect ourselves, and advance our profession.”

*“Frontline healthcare professionals in every setting have worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 pandemic and will be called on to do so for many months to come,” said PASNAP President Maureen May, R.N. “Their work needs to be respected, their life-saving efforts acknowledged and their contributions valued--not just by their patients but by their employers as well.”*

**The first step, accomplished today, is requesting voluntary recognition and filing for a union certification election with the National Labor Relations Board. Now, it is in Capital’s hands.**

The CRNA union, Wyoming Valley Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Association, is a local of Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP), which represents 8,500 nurses and healthcare professionals across the Commonwealth.

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