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September 26, 2017

To the Honorable Duke University Board of Trustees,

As the governing body of both the University and Duke University Health System, you should be aware of that one of your affiliated hospitals is damaging the reputation of your institution.

In 2012, the sale of Marquette General Hospital was approved, creating UPHS Marquette. This hospital is owned by Duke LifePoint, a partnership between Duke University Health System and the for-profit corporation LifePoint Health.

This past August, Marquette nurses delivered a report documenting more than **780 patient care consequences from inadequate or unsafe RN assignments** to the state of Michigan. [Misplaced Priorities: The Deteriorating Condition of Safe Patient Care at Duke LifePoint Upper Peninsula Health System-Marquette](#) is available online, and includes only incidents from 2017.

Before and after the report, Marquette nurses have negotiated in good faith with Duke Lifepoint. They are seeking a contract to ensure safe nurse staffing, as well as to attract and retain enough skilled RNs to serve their northern Michigan community.

Thus far, the hospital administration has refused to meaningfully address safety and staffing concerns. Without a breakthrough at the bargaining table, a two-day strike is scheduled for October 5 and 6.

According to your mission statement, Duke University seeks “to help those who suffer, cure disease, and promote health, through sophisticated medical research and thoughtful patient care,” as well as to “stimulate the best effort of all who are associated with the University; to contribute in diverse ways to the local community, the state, the nation and the world; and to attain and maintain a place of real leadership in all that we do.”

Therefore, we call on the Duke Board of Trustees to intervene on behalf of patients and the community by publicly urging Duke Lifepoint to negotiate a fair contract including safe staffing levels with nurses at UP Health System - Marquette.

Please feel free to contact us with questions and let us know how you plan to respond. More information is available at supportUPnurses.org.

Sincerely,



Scott Balko, RN
President, UPHS Marquette RN Staff Council



John Karebian
Executive Director, Michigan Nurses Association