



## Power-Up with JNESO and Celebrate Nurses!

Every May we celebrate nurses during National Nurses Week, recognizing their unwavering dedication to their patients and the compassionate care they provide 24/7.

Nursing has been ranked the [#1 Most Trusted Profession](#) for 22 years, a testament to how much we value nurses, but as the profession continues to evolve, today's nurses need more support to be able to provide the same outstanding quality of care they pride themselves on.

Nurses are resilient and strong, but issues with staffing shortages, added responsibilities, and shrinking hospital or facility resources have put a strain on these amazing health care professionals.

Empowering nurses and supporting them to make sure that their needs, concerns, and issues are addressed so they can give it their all, is what JNESO District Council 1, IUOE/AFL-CIO has been doing for 65 years.

Just as nurses advocate, educate, and provide physical and emotional support for their patients to garner the best health outcomes, JNESO fills that role for the safety and well-being of 5,000 union members at 15 facilities across New Jersey and Pennsylvania.



“Our JNESO members continue to rise to the challenge with courage and heart, fighting for resources like adequate PPE, staffing, safety protocols, and mental health supports to keep health care workers and patients safe,” said Elfrieda Johnson, President, Board of Directors for JNESO.

“The amount of protection the union has for nursing staff is undeniable and amazingly supportive,” said Judi Iannuzzi, a nurse for 13 years who works for Virtua Health – Marlton. “Working with JNESO Stewards and members I feel empowered and much stronger as a person because I know they support the nursing staff 100 percent, and they will go out of their way to talk to you, reassure you, and do what needs to be done.”



Marita Medina, a nurse for 36 years who has served as Vice President of the JNESO local at St. Mary's General Hospital in Passaic, said union support has made a real difference for her fellow nurses and for her personally.

“Being involved has made me more verbal and more knowledgeable. You have to know your rights so you can't be taken advantage of and keep yourself and your patients safe.” She explained, “JNESO helps with staffing, compensation, and if there is a work issue they are there to back you up.”

For nearly 40 years, Jill Wagner has been serving patients at Lehigh Valley Hospital – Pocono and has also been a union member the entire time. “JNESO has been very supportive and over the years they have gone to extreme lengths to help our nurses,” said Wagner. “Going to meetings helps you stay informed about what is going on in the hospital – outside your unit bubble – and helps prevent issues proactively.”

JNESO has a long track record of making a difference in the work lives of the health professionals they represent advocating for their rights in the workplace and beyond. “Through collective bargaining, advocacy, and community engagement, we provide support, assistance and advocacy in disputes, discrimination, and other workplace issues to ensure our members receive fair treatment under the law,” noted Johnson. “We empower our members through representation and negotiation, making them an integral part of the decision-making process in the facilities at which they work.”

JNESO also engages in advocacy beyond the workplace by addressing healthcare policy, patient care standards, and community health initiatives important to members and the communities where they work and live.



“JNESO has successfully lobbied for expansion of Unemployment Insurance protections for striking New Jersey workers, has pushed for passage of legislation to mandate safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios in New Jersey and Pennsylvania healthcare facilities,” said Douglas Placa, Executive Director of JNESO. “We have also taken a lead in advancing strategies and legislation to reduce workplace violence against healthcare workers, and the use of Just Culture as foundational to accountability, harm reduction, and patient safety.”

In addition to workplace support, JNESO provides members with professional development, continuing education opportunities, and scholarships that allow them to advance skills, stay current with industry trends, and pursue education and career growth.

Iannuzzi said her positive experiences with JNESO encouraged her to take a more active role as a Steward in her facility. “I am the person everyone tells what is going on, and now I will have the ways and means to get answers to questions and to make things better for our nurses.”

“We are fortunate to have a strong union that is able to ‘power-up’ our members,” said Wagner. “We appreciate the union, what they are doing, and what they can do!”

Unions have been in the news a lot over the past few years and according to Medina that is a very good thing: “Nurses are big part of the workforce and that needs to be recognized. We are part of the American Dream, we are there to provide care to people in our communities, but our needs are important too.” She added, “That is what JNESO does for us.”

To learn more about JNESO’s amazing nurses visit [CelebrateNurses.org](https://CelebrateNurses.org), and to find out how as a nurse you can “Power-Up” visit [JNESO.org](https://JNESO.org).

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