

7/18/2025

Subject: Urgent: Support Local Health Care Providers – Demand Essentia Bargain in Good Faith

Dear Concerned Community Members,

I'm reaching out as one of over 400 Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) currently on strike for over a week across Essentia Health's East Market. This includes nurse practitioners, physician associates (PAs), midwives, and clinical nurse specialists. We care for patients in emergency rooms, hospitals, urgent care, specialty clinics, and primary care settings—often serving as the sole provider in rural communities throughout northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

I am a physician associate working in the ER in Virginia. I was born and raised in Ely, where I now live with my husband and our 7-month-old daughter. I trained under the incredible providers at the Essentia Clinic in Ely—the very people who inspired me to pursue medicine in the first place. Like so many of my colleagues, I've built a life and career rooted in this region, caring for the people I grew up with.

In November 2023, over 400 of us formed a union with the Minnesota Nurses Association to protect patient care and ensure that those delivering care have a voice in how it's done. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) held a formal hearing and ruled that our union is legal and appropriate. They issued a bargaining order requiring Essentia to negotiate with us.


Essentia has refused.


They claim they cannot negotiate while appealing the decision—but that is simply not true. Federal labor law allows—and expects—employers to bargain while appeals are pending. The NLRB has stated that refusing to bargain in these circumstances is not only unnecessary—it's irresponsible.

Due to political gridlock in Washington, the NLRB currently lacks a functioning quorum to process appeals. This means Essentia's appeal could sit unresolved for years—years in which we would have no voice, while the hospital continues to make unilateral decisions that affect our patients, our families, and our communities.

This strike is not about politics or pay. It's about the right to be heard. It's about the right of rural clinicians to speak up for their patients, advocate for safe care, and have a seat at the table in decisions that affect lives.

We are asking for your support to protect the future of health care in our region. Here's how you can help:

 **Email Essentia leadership** and urge them to come to the bargaining table. This is an easy letter template that will automatically send your letter directly to Essentia Health Leadership.
[Send a Letter to Essentia Health Leadership to Pressure Them To Bargain](#)

 **Call our elected officials and ask them to publicly pressure Essentia to follow the law.**

Suggested script:

“Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I’m calling to ask you to support the over 400 Advanced Practice Providers on strike at Essentia Health. These essential providers have been legally recognized as a union, but Essentia is refusing to bargain. This violates federal labor law and harms patient care. Please speak out publicly and urge Essentia to come to the table.”


Governor Tim Walz (St. Paul Office): (651) 201-3400

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (Washington, DC Office): (202) 224-3244

U.S. Senator Tina Smith (Washington, DC Office): (202) 224-5641

 **Read more about our situation in the Star Tribune:**
[Essentia striking clinicians stuck in limbo awaiting federal labor ruling](#)

[Rural Health Care Provider Puts Pressure On Essentia Health](#)

 **Watch a short video explaining our strike:**
[Essentia Health APPs Need a Voice](#)

We love our work, we love our patients, and we love our communities. But none of us can provide safe, effective care without a voice.

Thank you for standing with us in this critical moment.

In solidarity,
Bria Schurke

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