



Affiliate of National Nurses United and AFL-CIO

Strike Authorization Vote FAQs – Aspirus Ironwood

Q. What is a strike?

A. A strike happens when a group of workers – in our case, Aspirus Ironwood nurses - come together and decide to withhold our labor to advocate for what is right.

Our goal is to get a strong contract at the bargaining table. But we must be willing and ready to act collectively, if needed, to get the contract we deserve.

Q. Why are we holding a strike authorization vote?

A. The shortest explanation is that we are holding a strike vote to win a fair contract.

Here's a longer explanation:

After months of negotiations, Aspirus Ironwood still won't offer us a fair contract. We continue to be apart because they refuse to agree on vital issues.

As nurses, we have to decide together how far we are willing to go to get the contract we deserve. We get to choose together: are we satisfied with what Aspirus is offering? If not, what are we willing to do to change the status quo?

Q. How will the decision be made about whether to strike?

A. A strike can only be authorized if we – the membership – choose to make it possible. We will hold a strike authorization vote where all dues-paying members are eligible to fill out a yes-no ballot. If a majority of those voting vote yes, our elected bargaining team will have the power to call for a strike if deemed necessary. If it comes to that, the team will give the hospital 10 days' notice so it can prepare.

Q. How do I participate in the strike authorization vote?

A. The vote will take place along with informational sessions to provide a bargaining update and answer any questions you have. It is important that all members vote so we can show

we're united! ***We will announce the time and place of the vote following bargaining that happens Wednesday, Oct. 29, if we don't reach a tentative agreement.***

Only members in good standing can vote. If you are not yet a member, you can join now by going to minurses.org/join. Membership applications will also be available at the vote. If you need to update your personal email address with MNA, [please do so by clicking here](#).

Q. Is striking legal? Am I protected from retaliation if I go on strike?

A. Yes. You have the legal right to strike. No action can be taken against your nursing license for participating in a strike. Retaliation from management against anyone for participating in a strike is strictly illegal. Illegal retaliation may include reducing regular hours, changing schedules, and issuing disciplines. MNA will aggressively defend members experiencing retaliation due to participation in legally protected strikes and union activity. If this occurs, please contact your MNA representatives immediately.

Q. When would the strike be?

A. If we vote to authorize our bargaining team to call for a strike, we would be giving them the power and ability to set a date for a strike in the future. Our team would provide 10-day notice of a strike so the hospital can prepare.

Q. How long would the strike last?

A. The duration of the strike would be determined by the bargaining team when it's announced.

Q. What is a lockout? Do we think Aspirus might lock us out?

A. A lockout would take place if Aspirus executives chose to prevent us from returning to work after the strike. It is an aggressively anti-union tactic designed to try to break workers' solidarity. We will continue to hold our picket lines should Aspirus take this extreme step.

Q. Can the hospital hire permanent replacements?

A. This is not likely and is ill-advised on the part of the hospital. In most strike situations, the use of temporary employees can satisfy the employer's needs to remain open. It would be very difficult to find skilled professionals willing to accept a job without assurance of continued employment when the strike is over, and it could potentially be illegal for management to seek to do so.

Q. Can the hospital or my manager ask me whether I would strike?

A. You should expect that the hospital or your manager will ask you about whether you would individually participate in a potential strike. You are legally protected from having to

answer. You may exercise your right to decline by politely refusing to respond. Hospitals often instruct managers to develop and use personal relationships with staff, in order to coerce or intimidate members. **You are not required to respond to these questions, and if you do, we urge you to simply reply that you do not know or are unsure.** It is illegal for management to ask you these questions in a coercive or intimidating way. If that happens, you should contact your MNA representatives immediately.

Q. How would patient care be impacted by a strike? What about my license?

A. We work diligently to protect our patients before and during any strike. This includes giving a 10-day notice of a strike to the hospital. Our strike would be to highlight issues affecting nurses and patients as a result of Aspirus's decisions. Your nursing license will not be negatively impacted by your decision to choose to act in solidarity and go on strike.

Q. How can I financially prepare for a strike?

A. The first option of course is to build up your savings to any extent that you can before a strike begins.

Other options are to call your mortgage or car loan provider and tell them you may not be able to make your payment and see if they are willing to work out a plan for repayment later. Many lenders for loans of all kinds are willing to be flexible if you ask ahead of time. MNA also has a strike fund that begins to pay a benefit of up to \$500 a week starting on the 8th day of a strike if you are a member and picket for designated shifts if you are physically able.

Q. What does it take to have a successful strike?

A. SOLIDARITY! The more workers we have standing together, the stronger we will be. Every nurse who chooses not to stand with us - should we decide to strike - weakens our union and our bargaining position.