



January 12, 2021

Lynn Blais, RN
President
United Nurses & Allied Professionals
375 Branch Avenue
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Ms. Blais:

We are in receipt of the petition the United Nurses & Allied Professionals (UNAP) recently filed with the National Labor Relations Board seeking to represent the nurses at Roger Williams Medical Center (RWMC). The timing of this petition—i.e., during another surge in the COVID-19 pandemic—is disappointing to say the least. Although RWMC does not believe an outside third party is the best option, we respect our nurses' legal right to support—or reject—a labor union.

However, today is not about legal rights—it is about what is right.

As you are probably aware, the positivity rate for Rhode Island is at 11.8%, and the positivity rate for Providence is at 13.6%. These percentages continue to grow each day as the Omicron variant spreads rapidly throughout our communities. RWMC is not only dealing with an increased census due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, but the hospital is also struggling with staffing, as many of our staff are unable to come to work due to getting sick with COVID-19, themselves.

For our patients, nurses, and community, challenging times are ahead, and our nurses will continue to provide excellent, compassionate essential care for our patients. In addition, there is continued uncertainty and anxiety around when the spread of COVID-19 will subside. Given these realities, now is not the time to distract our nurses with a fight over unionization. *This is a debate best saved for another day—a day when we are not facing a global health emergency.* Now more than ever, we must continue to focus on providing the highest quality care in extremely trying times.

We trust that you understand and agree that the health and safety of our patients, nurses, and communities come first. We ask that UNAP suspend its organizing efforts at RWMC, including the recently filed petition. The top priority must be taking care of our patients and each other. However, if our nurses want a secret ballot election, UNAP can always re-file the petition in several weeks once the surge has subsided. The parties then can agree to election dates and voter eligibility at that point. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey H. Liebman
Chief Executive Officer

Roger Williams Medical Center, 825 Chalkstone Avenue, Providence, RI 02908-4135 | (401) 456-2000 | rwmc.org