

# Registered Nurses at St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford Vote to Join Massachusetts Nurses Association

The 722 registered nurses of St. Luke's Hospital voted on Thursday, Nov. 29 to form a union and join the Massachusetts Nurses Association in an election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board.

"We're thrilled to be coming together as a union," said Deb Falk, a nurse in the emergency department at St. Luke's. "Those of us in the Emergency Department always felt kind of separated from the nurses on other floors, and I've loved getting to know so many great nurses throughout the hospital during our organizing. I really feel like we're a close family now. It's been amazing seeing so many of our co-workers coming together to improve conditions for our patients and our community."

"St. Luke's nurses are united!" said St. Luke's RN Kate Hughes. "We hope to work with everyone at St. Luke's in a positive way to create excellent outcomes. Our top concern has been the safety of our patients. As unionized nurses we will work together to make sure every St. Luke's patient has the safest possible care environment."

MNA president and registered nurse Donna Kelly-Williams congratulated the St. Luke's nurses for their brave effort to form a union.

"When nurses are organized, patients are the biggest beneficiaries," Kelly-Williams said. "Nurses at St. Luke's now

have a legally protected seat at the table with management to define their nursing practice and address issues impacting patients under their care.”

The MNA is the largest union and professional organization of nurses and healthcare professionals in Massachusetts. It represents 23,000 members in healthcare facilities across the state, including nurses at 70 percent of the Commonwealth’s acute care hospitals. The MNA is led by a board of directors that is directly elected by its membership and consists of front-line nurses and other healthcare professionals.

St. Luke’s nurses are planning to move quickly to negotiate their first contract. They were supported in their effort to unionize by MNA members at hospitals in Southeastern Massachusetts and throughout the state.