

September 28, 2021**Immediate Release****Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** jcav@chsbuffalo.org

Service Updates at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo

Mercy Hospital, as well as Kenmore Mercy Hospital and Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus continue to negotiate in good faith with CWA for 12-plus hours daily to reach a fair contract with market-competitive wages and benefits. With CWA Local 1133's strike at Mercy Hospital only days away and the parties tens of millions of dollars apart, the hospital has begun implementing additional steps to prepare for the union's strike.

We have made the decision, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health, to:

1. Divert ambulances from Mercy Hospital and the Mercy Ambulatory Care Center (MACC) beginning Wednesday, September 29, 2021.
2. Suspend inpatient elective surgeries at Mercy Hospital beginning Wednesday, September 29.

While Mercy Hospital and the MACC will go on temporary diversion to incoming ambulances, this does **not** mean the hospital's Emergency Department and the MACC will be closed to walk-in patients. We will continue to serve all patients who enter our doors for emergency care. This temporary diversion status informs local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers that the hospital cannot take patients brought in by ambulances at this time and they should take them to alternate facilities.

We believe these measures are in the best interest of our patients and community in light of the uncertainty regarding the potential strike, the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, and a steady increase in the number of COVID patients at Mercy Hospital and throughout our system. For these reasons as well, we encourage patients with minor medical emergencies to consider relying on area urgent care centers, their primary care provider, or telemedicine services like our CH CareOnDemand at [chcareondemand.org](https://www.chcareondemand.org).

If a patient is unstable and Mercy is the closest appropriate hospital, or if a patient specifically requests to be taken to Mercy Hospital, EMS has the option of bringing the patient to Mercy Hospital. We will continue to assess this situation as we prepare for the possible strike on Friday and beyond.

We will continue to accept ambulances and offer inpatient and outpatient elective surgeries at Sisters of Charity Hospital and its St. Joseph Campus, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, and Mount St. Mary's Hospital to minimize disruption to our patients and community.

We are disappointed the union is heading down a path to take nurses and other essential healthcare workers on strike as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our focus is on maintaining safe, high quality care at all our hospitals and limiting disruptions to our patients and their visitors should the union follow through with its strike threat at Mercy Hospital.