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CONTACT: Philip Petit
IAEP National Director
Phone: 617-376-7237
Email: ppetit@nage.org

First Responders Prepare for Potential Work Stoppage as Contract Talks with Hartford HealthCare Slow to Crawl

(Meriden, CT) — EMS professionals with Hunters Ambulance, members of International Association of EMTs and Paramedics (IAEP) Local 294, are preparing for a potential work stoppage as successor contract talks remain stalled out with new ownership group, Hartford HealthCare.

“Our members spoke loudly and clearly by rejecting a recent tentative agreement between the parties and issuing a statement of no-confidence in management,” said IAEP National Director Philip Petit. “Management simply is not hearing their workforce’s concerns. They’re not moving towards an agreement that works for them as an employer, for their employees, and most importantly – for the communities they serve.”

The IAEP and Hartford HealthCare management met for nearly the 50th bargaining session last week, with a continued focus on mandatory overtime and related safety concerns, as well as crafting a fair wage offer. Local 294 members remain concerned about the company’s growing 9-1-1 footprint through a new contract with the town of Southington, which will mean thousands of new calls despite existing staffing concerns and worsening morale in the department.

“On one hand, management is telling our members that the work they do is too important to their communities to leave their shifts open,” said Director Petit. “Then on the other hand, they’re telling them that they shouldn’t expect a wage that reflects that level of importance or skill. It’s not just disheartening; it’s infuriating to think that their employer expects them to sacrifice more time with their families every month while proposing, in some cases, below market wages.”

The IAEP continues to engage with management regarding communications and safety concerns, in the hope of a resolution soon. The members of Local 294 are preparing for job actions in the coming weeks, including the potential authorization of a work stoppage in the future.

“These are folks who do this work because they genuinely care for their patients, and they legitimately want to help people in need. The last thing we want is to move to a work stoppage, but we can’t continue to just sit at the table while management fails to bargain with any respect for what they’re asking from these heroes,” said Director Petit.

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