

Tending to Patients Becoming Increasingly Difficult as New York City Nurses Grow Overworked

BY SHANNON COOK

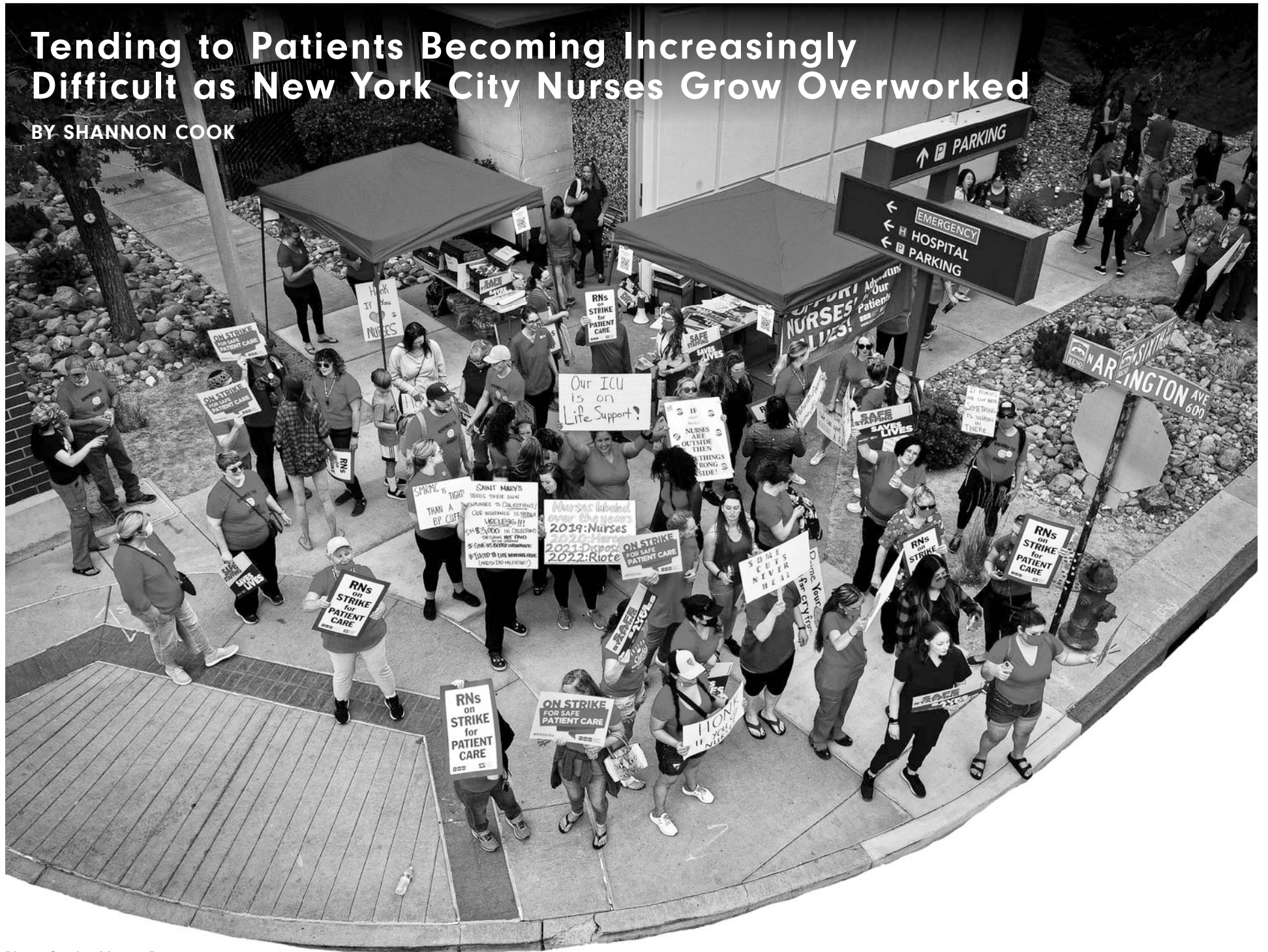


Photo Credit: Manny Becerra

ON MONDAY, JANUARY 9, more than 7,000 New York City nurses walked out during their long shifts at the Mount Sinai hospital in the Upper East Side and the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. Long hours, inadequate pay, and staffing shortages were to blame—with the dwindling pandemic being at the forefront of these issues. Many of these nurses claim they cannot do their jobs to the best of their ability with hospitals being so short-handed—something that has led to longer hours, a lesser quality of life for many, and a greater margin for medical mistakes and errors, according to some.

It has been evident that many nurses and other healthcare professionals have struggled to keep up with their heavy task loads since the pandemic swept the country, and evidence of such has been cited in the media a multitude of times. As such, this strike was not the first of its kind. However, a resolution to this strike has yet to be entirely settled. The ultimate goal of the nurses' strike was to increase wages, something many believe will lead to a resolution

of the staffing issues at hospitals, persuading hardworking individuals to join the workforce and possibly attracting others to join the medical field. This will simultaneously increase the quality of care given to patients, as nurses and staff will be more alert, rested, and focused while on the job if they have more time available to sleep and recharge between shifts.

Many nurses who joined this strike are members of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), according to the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO.) As credible members of the healthcare field, those who see the inner workings of a hospital day in and day out, many of them believe the staffing problem to be dangerous to the safety and well-being of their patients. According to the president of the New York State AFL-CIO, Mario Cilento, "It is time for the hospitals to treat these nurses fairly, with the dignity and respect they deserve, to ensure nurses can get back to serving their communities by providing

superior care to their patients." The care of the patients seems to remain at the forefront of this issue. Despite great emphasis being placed on wage increases, nurses remain adamant that their own well-being is not their only or their greatest concern.

NYC Labor Council President Vincent Alvarez has shown support for the nurses on strike, stating in the media, "The entire New York City Labor Movement stands with our nurses, who are courageously taking action against dangerous understaffing that threatens the safety of their patients. The decision to go on strike is never an easy one, particularly for workers who care so deeply about the patients and communities they serve." According to CNN, both hospitals have been utilizing the employment of travel nurses since the strike began on January 9th to attempt to fill the gap in their staffing numbers. That being said, provisional deals are said to be in the works currently, with many nurses having gone back to work since the strike originally began.