



TO: PENNSYLVANIA NURSE ALLIANCE

FROM: DONNA VICTORIA
VICTORIA RESEARCH & CONSULTING

RE: **NURSES AT UPMC AND OTHER PROVIDERS SUPPORT A NEW CONTRACT BETWEEN UPMC AND HIGHMARK; VOICE CONCERN ABOUT COMPROMISED PATIENT CARE**

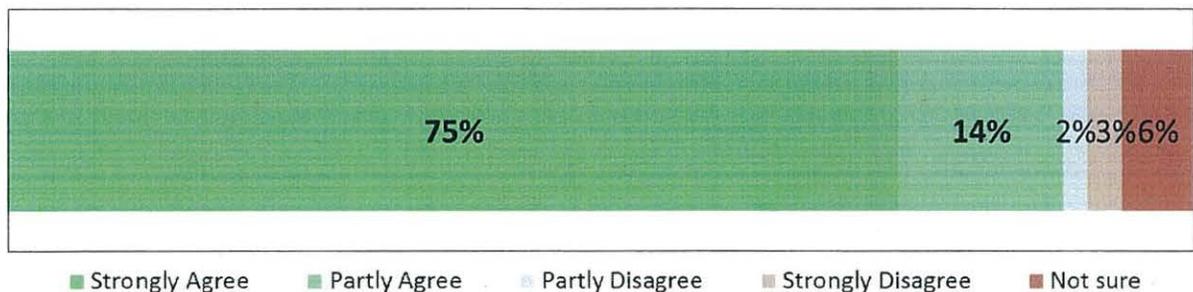
DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2013

Nurses provide front-line care to millions of patients in Western Pennsylvania every year. Providing quality care and protecting public health is a top priority expressed by nurses in Allegheny County, according to our recent survey of registered nurses. This is consistent with polling that has recognized nurses as America's most trusted profession in Gallup's annual poll since 2001. In fact, 85% of Americans rated nursing as America's most *honest* and *ethical* profession in 2012.

In Pittsburgh, where healthcare giants UPMC and Highmark have been embroiled in a public battle, nurses are weighing into the debate.

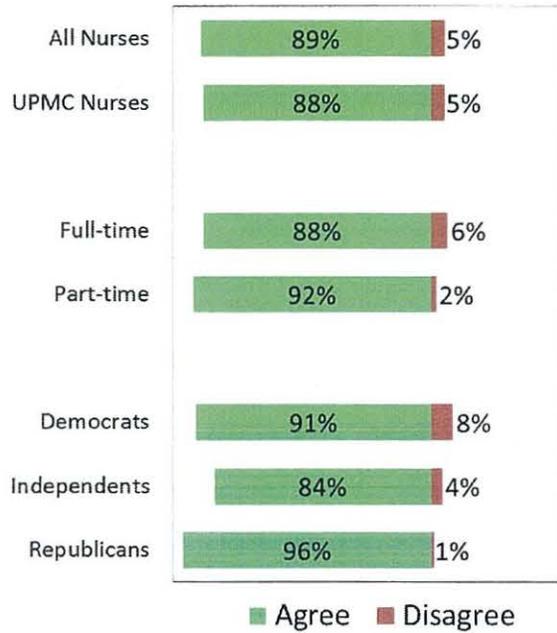
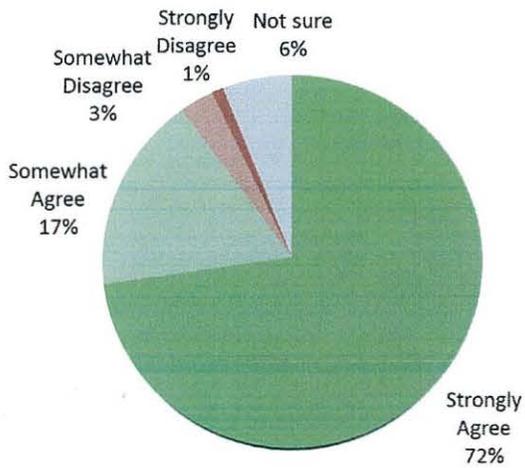
Ninety percent (90%) of nurses, including 87% of UPMC nurses agree with the following:

"When hospital networks refuse to contract with insurers, they put patients at risk by disrupting the continuity of care between a doctor and the patient."



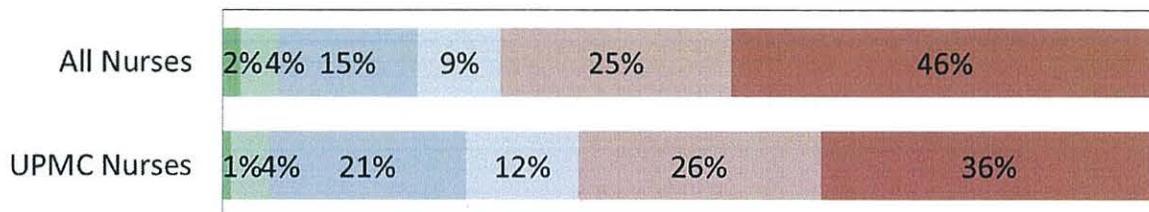
A vast majority of nurses say they support a new contract between UPMC and Highmark. **Overall, 89% of hospital RNs in Allegheny County (those who are currently working for a hospital or hospital-owned facility) agree that there should be a new contract, with 72% -- nearly 3/4s of all nurses surveyed -- expressing strong agreement.**

UPMC and Highmark should resolve their differences and settle a new contract.

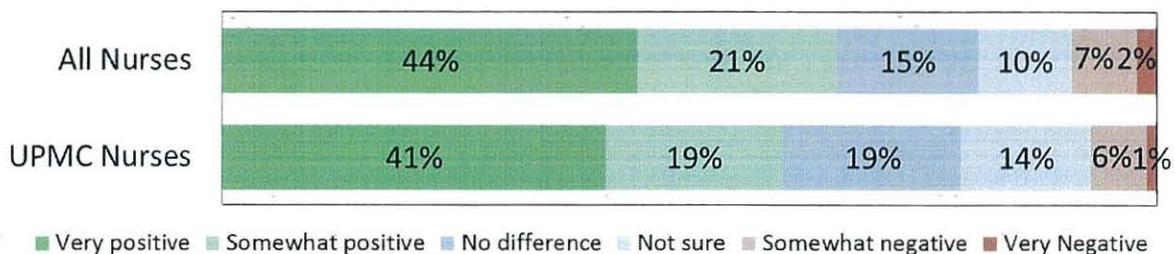


Allegheny RNs are consistent, no matter how the question is worded – if the rift between UPMC and Highmark is not mended with a contract, patient care is going to suffer. Seventy-one (71%) percent of Allegheny RNs believe patient care will be negatively affected if Highmark insurance customers in-network UPMC facility access is not restored. Sixty-two percent (62%) of UPMC’s own nurses say that UPMC’s actions will negatively impact patient care. The flip side of this equation is also true: 65% of Allegheny RNs say that patient care will be positively impacted if UPMC and Highmark renew their contract (59% of UPMC nurses agree patient care will be positively impacted).

“In Allegheny County, UPMC and Highmark are in a dispute about the future of healthcare in our region. UPMC has said that because Highmark has purchased a competing health system, UPMC must now refuse in-network access to patients with Highmark insurance beginning in 2015. What impact do you think this action by UPMC would have on patient care in our region – very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, very negative, or is there no difference?”



“Highmark has said that in order to ensure patient access , choice, and competition, UPMC should renew its contract with Highmark and provide in-network access to all patients regardless of their insurance. What impact do you think continued in network access for all patients to UPMC doctors and hospitals would have on patient care in our region – do you think it would be very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, very negative, or is there no difference?”



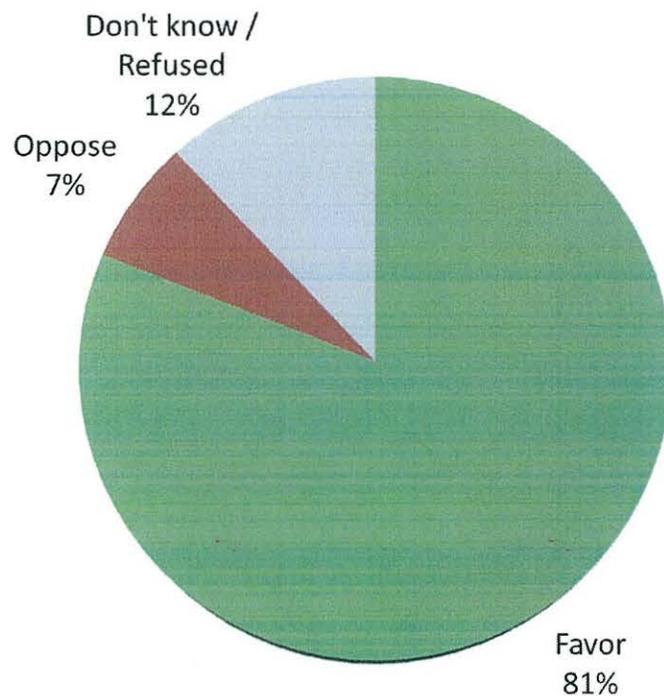
■ Very positive ■ Somewhat positive ■ No difference ■ Not sure ■ Somewhat negative ■ Very Negative

Additionally, nurses express overwhelming support for a legislative fix to protect patient care.

A similarly lop-sided majority of nurses in Allegheny County, 81%, are in favor of the legislation introduced by Representatives Frankel and Christiana to require integrated delivery networks (IDNs) to accept patients from all willing insurers.

This is particularly striking as very few policy issues these days show such strong support across partisan lines.

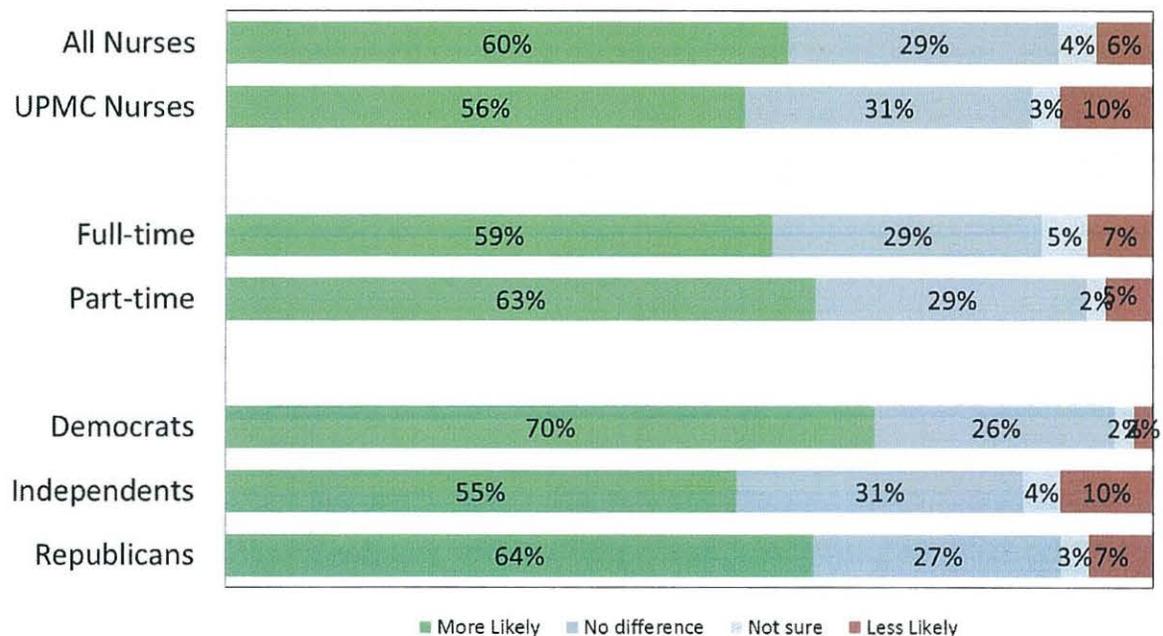
Support for law proposed by Frankel and Christiana to protect patient access



The issue of protecting patient care is so important to nurses in Allegheny County that they are willing to cast their vote on the issue. **Fully 60% of nurses say they would be more likely to support a candidate who takes action to get UPMC and Highmark to resolve their differences.**

As seen below, there is very little difference on this issue based upon whether nurses work for UPMC (56% more likely), or their partisan identification (Democrats 70% more likely to support a candidate, Republicans 64% More likely). RNs who are Independents were slightly less motivated by this, although a solid 55% majority still say “more likely” to support that type of candidate.

Nurses will support a candidate who pledges to take action to get UPMC and Highmark to settle new contract



This memorandum reports on the findings of a survey taken of registered nurses in Allegheny County, PA between November 3rd and November 8th. The survey completed 283 interviews with Registered Nurses within Allegheny County. All respondents verified that they were currently employed as Registered Nurses working at a hospital facility either full-time (66%) or part-time (34%). Results have a margin of error of plus or minus 5.8% at a 95% confidence interval. 113 respondents (40%) reported that they worked for a UPMC hospital. All questions about this memo or its contents should be referred to Donna Victoria (DonnaV@VictoriaResearch.com).