

Midsized Hospital Integrated Health System

Mid-Atlantic Region



“Our executive team has the highest regard for Huffmaster. When we were preparing for this contract, no other name came up. There is no reason for me to look elsewhere.”
-SVP & Chief Nursing Officer

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This regional hospital has one paramount goal for its partnership with a healthcare strike staffing firm – uninterrupted patient care. Of course, other things are very important to their leadership team – the vendor’s reputation, organization, references, planning, staffing, guidance, preparation, and leadership. But the vendor’s ability to properly prepare and provide the replacement staff that they promise is what allows the hospital to keep its doors open and keep its promises to its patients and its community in the event of a strike.

As part of a world-renowned integrated healthcare delivery system, this hospital has very high expectations for its own team and for the organizations with which it partners. It is a recognized innovator in providing new models of accountable, cost-effective, patient-centered care and has centers of excellence in seven different medical disciplines. Each year, it invests hundreds of millions of dollars in its facilities and information technology capabilities, as well as hundreds of millions in community contributions such as uncompensated care, community service programs, and support for medical research and education.

Huffmaster has been the hospital’s single source strike staffing partner for nearly 10 years, since the first possibility of a nursing strike appeared shortly after a smaller hospital was merged into its facility. But it wasn’t until the March 2014, after the hospital became part of the larger integrated delivery system, that the facility was given a 1-day strike notice and the strike preparation that Huffmaster and the hospital had conducted through several previous contract cycles was put to the test.

“We need 250 to 300 RN’s to operate our hospital through a strike, and Huffmaster provided 100% of what we needed to keep our doors open.” -SVP & Chief Nursing Officer

During the strike, Huffmaster provided fully state licensed and credentialed nurses, working 12-hour shifts in most cases. One of the recommendations that Huffmaster had made – and the hospital agreed to do – was to ask the striking nurses to provide face-to-face shift reports to the Huffmaster replacement nurses as they left the facility to join the picket line. It can be a tough situation on both sides, but Huffmaster made sure that the knowledge transfer was done professionally, including making sure that the replacement nurses also provided face-to-face shift reports to the permanent staff as they were called back by the hospital over the course of a 7 day period.

Prior to the start of the strike, Huffmaster set up a 2-day training program, training half of the replacement nurses each day with an orientation to the facility, equipment training, fire safety, disaster training, and using the electronic medical record (EMR) system. Along with the 12 hours of training each replacement nurse received prior to starting work, Huffmaster met with each clinical director and each unit director to make sure that the replacement staff was trained in any unit-specific policies and procedures.

When a new contract came up for ratification in early 2017, the hospital management team felt that working with Huffmaster during the previous strike gave them additional leverage at the bargaining table. When Huffmaster toured the facility with their shirts on, there was an immediate “buzz” that got around the hospital quickly. The nursing staff had no interest in striking, and the availability of a competent, professional strike staffing provider put pressure on the bargaining unit to settle the contract issues without a strike.