Press Release

For Immediate Release  Contact:  Marlena Pellegrino, RN   508-963-3801
May 18, 2011  Marie Ritacco, RN   508-831-8053
                                             Dominique Muldoon, RN   978-407-8129
                                             David Schildmeier   781-249-0430

St. Vincent Hospital RNs Ratify Three-Year Contract

Pact Provides Nurses with Industry-Leading Improvements in RN Staffing Levels.
No Nurse Will Be Assigned More than Four to Five Patients on Days,
No More than Five Patients on Nights
Pact also provides Improvements in Staffing for the Care of Maternity and Critical Care Patients

WORCESTER, MA -- The registered nurses of the St. Vincent Hospital cast an overwhelming vote tonight to ratify a new three-year contract. The three-year pact includes industry-leading, contractually enforceable RN-to-patient ratios that will transform the hospital from being one of the worst staffed hospitals in the state to one of the best.

“This is a great victory for nurses and this community. It was a long process but ultimately we were able to reach an agreement that will allow the nurses of this hospital to provide high quality patient care,” said Marlena Pellegrino, RN, co-chair of the nurses’ local bargaining unit. “The credit goes to our members. Our nurses came together to stand up for what they believed. It was the strength and unity of our union that has allowed us to push forward to such a successful settlement. This is a win for all parties, and the biggest winners will be our patients.”

The three-year agreement runs from Jan. 1, 2010 to Dec. 31, 2012. The pact includes the following key provisions:

- **Improvements to contractually guaranteed RN-to-patient ratios on all the hospital’s medical-surgical and telemetry floors** – Where the nurses’ contract previously allowed patient assignments of up to six on days and evenings and up to seven patients on nights, the new contract sets a safe limit of four to five patients per nurse on days and evenings and no more than five patients on the night shift. The nurses also achieved improved RN-to-patient ratios in the hospital’s maternity unit which are in keeping with established national standards for maternity care.

- **The addition of a “resource nurse” with a limited two-patient assignment to all medical-surgical and telemetry floors on day and evening shifts** – These nurses will supplement core staffing on these units to coordinate the flow of patients in and out of the units, while also providing support to nurses caring for patients with complex needs.
• **A guarantee that all critical care patients will receive the accepted standard of care no matter where they are in the hospital** -- As the hospital is planning to close eight to nine intensive care unit beds, which may result in critically ill patients waiting for an ICU bed, the parties agreed to contract language which assures that those patients will receive the same level of nursing care no matter where they are in the hospital.

• **A modest wage increase** – The pact includes a 1 percent across the board increase effective Jan. 1, 2011, and an additional 1 percent across the board increase effective Jan. 1, 2012, along with a new 2 percent step at the top of the salary scale effective upon ratification.

The nurses began negotiating a new contract with Vanguard management in December of 2009 and a total of 42 negotiating sessions were held with the parties reaching a tentative agreement on May 4, averting a strike that was set to begin on May 6, National Nurses Day.

# # #

Founded in 1903, the Massachusetts Nurses Association is the largest professional health care organization and the largest union of registered nurses in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its 23,000 members advance the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the economic and general welfare of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Legislature and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public. The MNA is also a founding member of National Nurses United, the largest national nurses union in the United States with more than 150,000 members from coast to coast.