



**LOCAL 1031, AFL-CIO**  
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July 20, 2020

This communication is being sent via email

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**Re: Rutgers-RWJ Barnabas Agreement to Merge Medical Schools**

CWA Local 1031 represents thousands of workers at all of the State Colleges, Rutgers University, UHNJ, 24 Libraries, (mostly in Essex County) and we hold several municipal contracts. We are writing to you today about the proposed merger of the two medical schools at Rutgers. We stand against this merger. We are asking our members to write to all of you about the proposed merger.

Rutgers University is actively working to merge the RWJ Barnabas Medical School located in New Brunswick with the New Jersey Medical School located in Newark without oversight and transparency. Rutgers is a state entity governed by state laws and regulations. The merger of two public Medical Schools should only happen through legislative review and approval. Historically, changes to the medical school structure, function, and location were only accomplished through legislation; however, Rutgers is attempting to bypass the legislature. The current proposal could contravene legally binding commitments in current state statute enshrined in the Newark Accords' commitments to the community.

Since the re-organization of Higher Education in 2012, one of Rutgers University's missions is to maintain a thriving University Hospital/Rutgers Health campus to ensure that public health needs are met for the City of Newark and Greater Essex County.

We are reaching out to you today to convey our concerns regarding Chancellor Strom's plans to consolidate the medical schools and the potential negative impact on University Hospital of NJ (New Jersey's only Public hospital) and the Rutgers Health campus in Newark. Residents, interns and fellows are a critical part of the hospital's workforce and with a centralized system for allocating these positions; there will be an incentive to reallocate residents/fellows away from UHNJ and into more suburban hospitals to support physicians that generate higher revenues from a "better" pay or mix.

These actions would be a direct violation of the Newark Agreements in which University Hospital and the Rutgers Health campus (formally UMDNJ) were re-dedicated to the Newark Community in an organized manner.

**For these reasons, CWA Local 1031 opposes the medical school merger.** To protect the interests of the community, any merger must maintain all prior commitments to the City of Newark, preserve current services, and invest in future programs to enhance the quality of healthcare services and medical education. Legislation or regulations must be put in place that will restrict Rutgers from unilaterally moving or displacing residents, interns, fellows, clinical services, and faculty to other hospitals, regardless of the financial motivations for doing so. University Hospital **must** have veto power over any move that involves the workforce, as bound by statute, in order to protect the integrity of the Newark campus.

**A NJMS/RWJMS merger can weaken University Hospital at a critical time.** By law, New Jersey Medical School is its chief partner. The medical school merger will likely hamper University Hospital's rebirth under CEO Elnahal's leadership. New Jersey Medical School should not abandon University Hospital and divert scarce time, money, and resources to another merger when University Hospital is still in a critical phase of rebirth.

We are also concerned about the pending master affiliation agreement (MAA) between Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and RWJ-Barnabus Health. **Key parts of the Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health and Rutgers University 20-year, multi-billion-dollar affiliation still have not been made public even though Rutgers is a public institution funded in part by tax payer monies.** This relationship should be discussed publically before any new policies or ventures are implemented. Many of the successor agreements to the master affiliation agreement are made to determine cash flows between the medical schools and the health system. Without transparency and public discussion, it is impossible to know how each medical school will receive the proper amount of support. Thus, the merger is premature.

It was made clear in the recently published article in the NJ-Spotlight (<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/07/partnership-between-njs-state-university-system-large-private-health-network-almost-complete/>) that Chancellor Strom intends to have all Rutgers physician faculty managed by the RWJ-Barnabus Medical Group, and all faculty practices to be managed by RWJ-Barnabus Health. University Hospital must be the primary academic medical center for Rutgers NJ Medical School. The relationship between the hospital and its medical staff is meant to be protected by law.

We strongly believe University Hospital, the public, and legislators were intentionally excluded from these discussions from the beginning because Chancellor Strom and RWJ Barnabas did not want to lose a lucrative opportunity under which a stronger affiliation would be advantageous to RBHS. Rutgers is legally bound to continue its collaboration with University Hospital without compromising or minimizing the services it provides to the Newark community.

CWA Local 1031, along with the UHNJ Labor Coalition and the Newark Community Coalition, intend to work with all of you to ensure that University Hospital is not forced into a broader plan between the state's university and a private sector entity, without University Hospital's involvement. We will not stand by and allow a hostile takeover, facilitated by Rutgers University. Such actions are against the interests of the residents of Newark, greater Essex County, University Hospital's patients, students and employees.

In conclusion, CWA Local 1031 with our members and coalition partners will fight to ensure University Hospital remains a vital public entity that serves the community of Newark, greater Essex County and the state.

In Solidarity,

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