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Nurses vote to organize

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Registered nurses at a northwest Harris County hospital voted to unionize late Friday, becoming the only organized RNs among the state's private hospitals in an election that was closely watched in the medical community.

The 119-111 vote to organize registered nurses at Tenet Healthcare-owned Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center Hospital with the California Nurses Association was supervised by the National Labor Relations Board.

David Monkawa, the union's regional organizing officer, praised the action.

"It's a real testament to the nurses who stood up for a voice for patient care," he said.

In a written statement, the hospital said it was "disappointed" in the result but "will not let this distract us from our focus of providing high quality care to our patients."

Balloting took place Thursday and Friday.

Union organizers said the primary focus of the campaign was patient care, largely through improving nurse-to-patient ratios. The hospital contended organization was unnecessary.

The hospital has about 275 registered nurses. Despite its name, the California Nurses Association represents about 80,000 nurses nationwide.

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