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SAINT PAUL, Minn., Nov. 3 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Formation of the largest nurses' union and professional association in U.S. history took another major step forward Monday with a unanimous endorsement of the affiliation agreement vote by delegates representing 80 percent of the members of the United American Nurses (UAN). Even as a number of state affiliates inexplicably failed to attend the meeting, the national delegate assembly of the UAN moved forward to create the 150,000 member RN "Super Union."

Meeting in Orlando, Fla., the UAN National Labor Assembly also elected Jean Ross, RN, of the Minnesota Nurses Association as a Co-President of the NNU. Joining her on the NNU leadership team from the UAN affiliates are Linda Slattengren and Bernadine (Bunny) Engeldorf from Minnesota and Diane Goddeeris from Michigan.

Coming out of this meeting, UAN members are even closer to joining with the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee and the Massachusetts Nurses Association. The president and vice president of the UAN walked out of the meeting, supporting the elected leaders and staff from some of the affiliates who chose not to attend in a conspiracy to deny a quorum. Yet, delegates attending from Minnesota, Michigan, District of Columbia and Southern United Nurses were steadfast in their resolve to move forward. As required by the UAN Constitution, there

will be an expeditious mail ballot of all the NLA delegates to approve the Consolidation and Affiliation Agreement.

"This brings us closer to the vision of our late president Cheryl Johnson of reuniting these states and achieving the greater voice and collective power of a national nurses movement our patients and our profession so rightly deserve," said Ross. "We are committed to the NNU. We are so impressed with the solidarity demonstrated by the delegates attending the NLA. We will continue to reach out to those that weren't there and expect that they too will see the amazing value of the NNU to organized nurses."

The founding convention of the new National Nurses United will be held five weeks from today in Phoenix on Dec. 7. At that convention, leaders of National Nurses United will commence plans to step up representation drives for non-union nurses across the nation and to campaign for passage of S 1031, the national RN ratio and rights legislation sponsored by the NNU.

"Our members are ecstatic to be aligning with other nurses across the nation to dramatically change the face of healthcare and increase the ability of RNs nationally, through the NNU, to improve patient protections and nursing standards," said Linda Hamilton RN, President of the Minnesota Nurses Association and a Director of the UAN. "Together we will be an unstoppable force for defining and creating a new future for the nursing profession and patient care."

UAN Director Sandra Falwell, DCNA, agrees, but adds, "We may be a smaller association than the others, but we know this will be our opportunity to expand our reach and create a new future for our members. It is unfortunate that some affiliate leaders spent money to send staff but not send member delegates to our meeting."

"In creating National Nurses United, we are working in concert with nurses across the country to give direct-care nurses the power and influence to make the changes necessary to protect our patients," said Michigan Nurses Association President Jeff Breslin, RN.

This week's Labor Assembly follows convention ratification votes by CNA/NNOC in September and Massachusetts Nurses Association last month.

It also follows months of work by leaders of the three organizations to create a historic new organization which they say is especially critical in an era of multi-state employers, attacks on patient care and nursing standards, the ongoing effects of the national economic recession, and the need for a more effective, unified national voice for RNs.

The Minnesota Nurses Association is the largest and fastest-growing union for registered nurses in Minnesota and the Midwest. Representing more than 20,000 nurses, MNA is a multi-purpose organization that promotes high standards for nursing education and practice, and works to advance the profession through collective bargaining and legislative activity.

The Michigan Nurses Association is the largest, most effective union for RNs in Michigan. As the voice of all registered nurses in Michigan, MNA advocates for nurses and their patients at the State Capitol, in the community and at the bargaining table.

MNA is a constituent member of the United American Nurses and an affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

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