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National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter

**BY E-MAIL AND FACSIMILE**

April 10, 2014

Judge Ruth Astle  
Office of Administrative Hearings  
1515 Clay Street, Suite 206  
Oakland, CA 94612

***RE: Case No. 2013110565; Kaiser Foundation Health Plan Inc. & Department of Managed Health Care***

Honorable Judge Astle:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter (NASW-CA) to express our strong opposition to a motion filed by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan (Kaiser) that attempts to seal from the public's view the proceedings of an upcoming administrative hearing scheduled for May 12, 2014.

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter represents over 10,000 professional social workers in California who have degrees from accredited social work programs across the country. NASW-CA advocates, on behalf of our members and their clients, for the implementation and improvement of programs and policies designed to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people.

With respect to Case No. 2013110565 involving Kaiser and the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) has an important duty to protect the public's First Amendment rights as administrative hearings are presumed to be open to public observation. Additionally, Kaiser provides health services to more than 7 million California enrollees and is our state's largest health maintenance organization. As a matter of public concern, these circumstances are especially important given that the institution in question is charged with protecting Californians' rights to essential health services.

An order to conceal the hearing from the public would have a substantial impact on the millions of Californians who should be allowed to observe the proceedings in order to view the full functioning of their government. For the foregoing reasons, NASW-CA respectfully requests that the court deny any motion that seeks the closure of the hearing from the public. Thank you in advance for your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Gonzales".

Rebecca Gonzales  
Director of Government Relations and Political Affairs