

Why is NUHW calling for a federal investigation into Kaiser's mental health services?

- In June the U.S. Department of Justice launched an investigation of the Veterans Affairs Department for delaying veterans' access to health care, concealing those delays, and rewarding managers for keeping access levels low.
- Kaiser's violations are identical to those committed at the VA: excessive and illegal wait times for appointments; the use of paper wait lists to conceal those delays; financial incentives that encourage managers to conceal delayed and deficient care; retaliation against whistleblowers; and failure to monitor and correct the problems. Nationally, Kaiser serves more patients than the VA.
- These failures in mental health care stem from Kaiser's effort to keep costs down by maintaining low staffing levels, by delaying and denying services, and by funneling patients into less costly care.
- Kaiser's policies have harmed patients and families and have sometimes resulted in tragedies, even suicides.
- The problems persist. Recent data from the Oakland and Richmond facilities show that Kaiser is failing to provide timely first appointments to sixty-five percent of new patients.
- We have an ethical responsibility to address and correct Kaiser's deficiencies in mental health services, especially when these deficiencies derive from profit-driven decision making.
- We have an obligation to be an advocate for our patients. No government body plays an effective watch dog role. Even the DMHC has been slow to act and only after huge efforts on our part did it levy a fine of \$4 million dollars against Kaiser.
- Kaiser publicly dismisses our very real concerns as a bargaining ploy. Therefore we are obligated to take other steps. By appealing to the federal government to investigate Kaiser's illegal delays and denials of mental health care, we are simply using every resource available to us to force Kaiser to keep its promise to its patients.



NATIONAL UNION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS

