



NUHW PULSE

KAISER OPTICAL

JULY 2018

OUR CONTRACT — DID YOU KNOW...

Using Flexible Personal Days

If you work 20 hours or more per week you are a “regular” employee and qualify for three Flexible Personal Days each year. These days can be used for any personal reasons but must be taken in blocks of no less than two hours. Management has to grant you a request for a Flex Day if you submit it at least two weeks in advance, but they may still grant or deny your request to use your Flex Days if you submit your request in a shorter amount of time or if your request is for consecutive days off or for days before or after a holiday, on a case-by-case basis. You need to use these days between November 1 and October 31 — otherwise unused days will be converted to 50 percent of their value to cash out at termination or retirement. Please see Article XIII, Section 3 and section four flexible personal days (pages 25-26 in your contract).

Putting in an Automatic Bid

If you are going on vacation and don't want to miss out on a vacancy for a new position, fear not, because you can submit a written notification to your manager on a different position which counts as an automatic bid for that job. These written requests (via email or fax) are good for three months and can be renewed by your manager (via email or fax) for an additional three months.

Questions? Contact your steward or your NUHW organizer.



OPTICAL MEMBERS DELIVER DEMAND PETITION

Our Optical Demands petition, which was signed onto by over 80 percent of our members, was delivered on June 7 to Optical Senior Branch Management by a team of stewards and members from both the branches and the lab.

The petition outlined some of the top concerns of our members, including increased transparency and communication regarding the Optical Incentive Plan; holding lab supervisors and branch managers more accountable; creating a meaningful mechanism for employee feedback on managers; working collaboratively with us to develop a staffing model for Optical Dispensers and Contact Lens Fitters, with an emphasis on creating more 40-hour positions; and following the law by notifying the union before making any changes that significantly affect working conditions.

We respectfully requested that Regional Optical Management meet with a delegation of our stewards to discuss these demands within 30 days of delivery of the petition, no later than July 7. Joe Yuson contacted us and we had a first meeting on Monday, July 2, supported by a RED DAY in solidarity in all the branches. In the meeting, Dean Kranenburg, Joe Yuson, Steve French, Will Axe and Jeff Leach met with two of our staff and five of our stewards to listen to us present statistics, examples, and details regarding the items in our petition. While they did listen to us, they made no clear commitments to change anything and we are now requesting a second meeting.

This is just the beginning and our membership will continue to demand change until these problems are solved. We sincerely hope that every member of Regional Optical Management will join other top senior executives in Kaiser Permanente in committing to a truly collaborative and problem-solving relationship with NUHW and our Optical members.

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UPDATE ON OUR FITTER/ APPRENTICE GRIEVANCE

On May 4, we submitted a regional grievance for all affected members in Optical because KP and Regional Optical Management have circumvented their bargaining obligations by implementing something they proposed, but did not win from the union, in the last round of bargaining — namely, having a “classification” of employees who are assigned to be both fitters and dispensers at the same time. In many branches, “fitter apprentices” are being told by their managers to open their schedules to drop-in fits rather than these patients being scheduled into regular fitter schedules. Has this been happening in your branch? If so, talk with your steward or your organizer about it.

The grievance calls on the employer to stop the practice of assigning Apprentice/ Dispensers from same days fits; pay CLFs for any day in which same day fits have been assigned; post and fill additional CLFs hours and positions that are needed when these other practices are stopped; and promote all CLF Apprentices who meet the requirements to CLFs.

The employer initially delayed responding to our grievance but we eventually had a Step 2 meeting in Redwood City on July 2, which resulted in a response from HR denying the employer had violated the contract. We have moved the grievance to Step 3 and are prepared to file an unfair labor practice charge with the NLRB if needed.

WHY DO WE NEED STRONG STEWARDS?

At our March Steward Council meeting NUHW Organizer Peter Brogan sat down with two long-time stewards to discuss why they became stewards. Here we highlight one of these discussions, with Sonia Minor.

PB: How long have you worked for Kaiser and how long have you been a steward?

SM: I have been a shop steward for about 18 years and employed with Kaiser for 27 years. Currently, I work in the Martinez branch as a Contact Lens fitter.

PB: Why did you become a steward? And why have you stuck with it?

SM: I guess about 15 years ago there were some issues happening at the Lab when I was there. People were complaining. We were hearing all these things that were happening that were negatively affecting people. So someone approached me and asked that if I was so mad about these things, why didn't I do something about it. You should become a shop steward, they told me. From then I looked into it and became a steward so that I could help move my co-workers from complaining about problems to taking action to solve them. Once I started as a steward I became really passionate about it because it meant I was helping working class people live better lives, at the workplace and in our communities. This is what the union is all about. To me it made sense that if the union is bringing pay up at Kaiser it is really bringing it up also across the industry. When we raises wages at Kaiser with our union, everyone benefits from that, the non-union workers as well as union workers because it's bringing the level of pay up. Coming from tough, low-income cities it was meaningful for me to help build a strong member-driven union, where all my co-workers were involved in trying to make our lives better at work, by making changes and winning a voice for all the members in the union. Being a steward meant that I could be at the center of this work and make a real difference for my co-workers.

PB: So what difference do you think having a strong steward in your workplace makes as compared to not having a steward at all?

SM: When there's no strong steward in the office contract violation will likely happen. Managers get to run offices the way they want to, without the input of



Sonia Minor

workers at the branch, which may lead to further violations of our rights and the contract. I think it's important to have good relationships with your members, keeping them updated, so that people are aware of their rights. And when people are educated about their rights at work and willing to stand together to enforce those rights we can work in a more harmonious environment and get great pay and benefits. If we want

to make sure we have job security and a contract that protects our members, we need strong stewards at the branches and at the Lab to help educate folks and build a united group of people willing to stand up for each other. When we don't have any stewards we know managers will disrespect staff and violate the contract. If there are no stewards, why should management even bother trying to follow the contract?

PB: So we have a few branches that still have no stewards. If someone at one of these offices were thinking about becoming a steward what would you tell them about why it's important to be a steward and how they can succeed in this role?

SM: I think one of the main things that I would say is that most branches that don't have stewards are probably being run more by management and that there are things going on that shouldn't be happening, whether it's stuff relating to workload, unjust discipline, or just basic respect for our workers. So I would say that to anyone interested in making any changes, the way to do that is by building a strong union at your office or in the lab by becoming a shop steward. When you're a steward at NUHW it means you're the heart of a well respected, member-driven union and you will learn so much about making changes, both in and outside Kaiser. You'll learn how to be pro-active as a leader in your workplace and in your community, including learning how to make important political change by getting people elected that work for the rights of working people. By paying into the Union's COPE (Committee on Political Education) fund and canvassing for local candidates, I've really learned a lot about how to get politicians to listen to us and push forward a pro-worker agenda. I think it is very important that we have someone to be a representative for the union and their co-workers in each office because it allows us to maintain certain standards.