



NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

Kaiser Permanente – IBHS

JANUARY 2018

SFO PSYCHIATRY ORGANIZES COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

We organized two collective actions in 2017 in response to unreasonable changes to our working conditions.

Starting in August 2017, the adult team therapists started experiencing sudden changes to our appointment codes and conversion of unfilled RAI's to UAI's. UAIs were eventually eliminated because "they went unbooked." Unfilled RAI's were then converted to NAI's, some of these in evening hours with little or no security presence.

After two months of ignoring our attempts to stop these changes and to bargain them, management sent a department-wide "Thank you for your hard work" email and scheduled a token lunch. Our adult team therapists responded by successfully organizing the department to boycott the lunch and to wear red, to let management know we did not appreciate their unresponsiveness and lack of collaboration.

We also filed a collective grievance, which was signed by nearly all adult team therapists and submitted it to management via email two hours prior to the boycotted lunch. After a couple of grievance meetings when it became apparent management was using the grievance process to delay addressing our issues in any meaningful way, we organized a second action.

We once again got most of the department to wear red, this time at a meeting where the Medical Center leadership presented their "vision" to Psychiatry. The "vision" involved seeing new patients sooner because all the other specialty clinics are able to offer same-day access for new patients.

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ANTIOCH MEMBERS EXERCISE RIGHT TO CONVENE

In October, Antioch steward Mary Anne Beach organized an action to show management that NUHW members have the right to come together as union members and that we won't back down when intimidated. The action was in response to management's reaction to a September gathering at which stewards and members greeted their new NUHW organizer, Pysay Phinith. We had a huge turnout with more than 75 percent of our members attending — the largest turnout we've had in nearly a year.



Members greeted each other with smiles and laughter, introduced themselves to their new organizer, asked questions about union issues, and shared concerns about their working conditions. Within 30 minutes, a manager walked in and told us that we could not meet and that he knew "many of you don't have lunch" on their schedules. The manager's arrival created such fear in the room that group disbanded within minutes.

In response, Mary Anne organized a social picnic on the lawn directly across the street from the clinic and in clear view of the manager's office window. Despite some initial trepidation, we gathered and sent a message to management: "We are united and strong!"

OUR 2018 BARGAINING GOALS — PREPARING TO WIN!

This year, three of our four Kaiser bargaining units — IBHS, Psych-Social, and Health Care Pros — will head into contract negotiations. While each bargaining unit has had different struggles in the past, we share a common goal — staying united and winning the best contracts! At NUHW's Leadership Conference in October, our Kaiser stewards convened and set bargaining goals to help achieve this.

Our bargaining goals:

1. Ensure that every member knows the history of our IBHS bargaining unit
2. Improve communication across worksites and between members and the bargaining committee
3. Ensure as many voices as possible are included in all bargaining steps
4. Engage every member in worksite and regional actions to strengthen our bargaining efforts.

We're also planning to expand our political power by getting involved in local, state and political elections. Through endorsements, door-knocking, and increased contributions to our COPE political fund, we will work to ensure that our elected leaders are strong advocates for healthcare, social safety net programs, and mental health parity.

To win the best contracts possible, we all need to get involved — in our workplaces, in negotiations, and in the political realm.

OUR CONTRACT: DID YOU KNOW?

If you report to work and "become ill, or need to leave work due to an emergency, sick child, or for some compelling reason," or if you have a scheduled MD appointment during a normal work shift, you will be paid for the day as if it were a normal work day with no deduction from PTO. (*Article XV, Sec 4.3 & Article XXIII, Section 2*)

We have a right to have an NUHW member from the department involved in the interview committee whenever a vacant position is being filled (*Article X, Section 2*)

SFO PSYCHIATRY

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After management tried, unsuccessfully, to bar NUHW Organizer Pysay Phinith from the meeting, several therapists expressed the concerns we have with management's "vision." Although Medical Center management truly does not understand what we do and we are still far apart in our perspectives, as a result of our collective actions, they have now begun to listen and work with us more. For example, we no longer have to see new patients after 5 p.m. and there is now a cap on conversions.

SAN JOSE CHALLENGES SCHEDULE MANAGEMENT

San Jose used to pride itself as one of the best facilities in the region. In the past few years, however, changes at the worksite have led to low morale, fear of retaliation, some of the highest turnover rates in the region, and inflexibility from management.

Despite this, members have continued to speak up. We filed a grievance over severe Schedule Management contract violations in Adult Psychiatry. The department refuses to refer out and instead uses "Super Thursdays" (canceling meetings to add 25+ intakes into the schedule), "Cluster Intakes" (forcing clinicians to do up to three intakes in a row and forcebooking intakes into their IPC time), etc.

Management refused to acknowledge that this violates both the contract and the agreement on Schedule Management made on April 20, 2017. The chief, Jake Roth, gets awards for San Jose Psychiatry's access rates, which come at the expense of clinicians and patients. In addition to the grievances underway, concerns were brought to the Regional PPC, which led to an organizational investigation. We will continue to push back against San Jose management in every way possible until things change.

JOIN THE BARGAINING COMMITTEE!

One of the best ways to be a part of shaping the next contract is to join the bargaining committee! Our NUHW IBHS contract expires September 30, 2018. We would like to begin negotiations in July and complete bargaining by October. We'll send updates and share how you can get involved throughout the entire bargaining process.

There is no limit to how many members can be on the bargaining committee. However, Kaiser will only pay for eight members to attend any one session, so you must be willing to attend some of the sessions without a guarantee of pay.

To seek nomination, you must agree to:

- Represent the interests of your co-workers
- Attend bargaining sessions and planning meetings
- Keep members informed during the bargaining process
- Organize co-workers to participate in actions to accomplish our bargaining goals
- Help craft union proposals to respond to management's proposals

If you'd like to be a member of the bargaining committee, please notify your steward or organizer to learn more about the process.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY RESULTS

In the fall of 2017, we administered an 18-item survey focused on recruitment, retention, engagement, and contract communications to our IBHS membership. The response rate was 42 percent — a total of 606 responses out of 1,428 surveys distributed.

NUHW presented these results December 13 to Kaiser's senior leadership team as well as to the Regional Mental Health Administration management team. We stressed that dissatisfaction (to put it mildly) with Schedule Management and lack of return access were two major themes. These results have helped us convince them that we cannot wait until bargaining to address the multiple issues involved with Schedule Management, although how and when we begin addressing the issues is yet to be determined.

Highlights and key findings from the survey:

What feedback do you have for KP regarding your recruitment process experience?

Some of the more common themes that arose from responses to this question included: 1) length of time for the hiring process; 2) lack of clarity and communication about the hiring process; and 3) a confusing online system for hiring.

I would recommend KP to a colleague as a good place to work.

Responses to this question revealed that, as respondents' length of employment at Kaiser Permanente increased, an increasing number responded "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to the prompt. Respondents working in the Psychiatry Department generally had fewer people recommending KP as a good place to work.

What things can KP do to attract and retain more clinicians?

Responses varied for this open-ended question. Nevertheless, nine themes or categories emerged: Performance Metrics, Pay and Benefits, Access, Advancement Opportunities, Respect, Fairness, Transparency, Student Loan Repayment, and Collaboration. "Other" was included as a category to capture responses that did not clearly fit into any of the remaining nine categories.

Excluding responses coded as "Other," more than one in three responses addressed the issue of performance metrics such as schedule management and the 4:1 ratio. The supermajority of clinicians generally held unfavorable views of these performance metrics and many stated that the implementation of such tools had increased workload and, for some, led to burnout. Others stated that schedule management had shifted the focus towards productivity and away from quality care.

Contact any of your NUHW stewards or organizers for the full summary of the survey.

