

OAKLAND KAISER MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS ON STRIKE

Rally and press conference at
10 a.m. Wednesday, April 23,
at Kaiser Permanente's eastern entrance
on Howe Street in Oakland.



Clinicians at Kaiser Permanente's Oakland Medical Center are launching a one-day strike to call attention to deficiencies in Kaiser's mental health services that have led to severe hardships for patients and their families in Oakland and throughout the state.

Systemwide, Kaiser Permanente's mental health departments are understaffed, with not enough therapists, counselors, and social workers to provide services for the number of patients seeking care. Kaiser members in dire need of mental health services are often required to wait months for appointments, in violation of state law. In some cases, these delays and denials of care have even resulted in patient suicides. And these problems will only increase as hundreds of thousands of Californians become Kaiser members under the Affordable Care Act.

Kaiser caregivers first sounded the alarm about these issues in 2011. Investigators for California's Department of Managed Health Care confirmed the clinicians' findings and levied a \$4 million fine against Kaiser for illegally delaying patients' access to mental health services and for "systemic" violations of California law, including the California Mental Health Parity Act.

Unfortunately, Kaiser has done little to correct these problems, forcing clinicians to take matters into their own hands. Oakland's clinicians, with the support of their Kaiser colleagues throughout the state, are making their stand with a one-day strike to help educate the public about the failures of the state's largest HMO.

For more information, see NUHW.org

