On Wednesday, March 27, we welcomed the addition of a neutral facilitator, respected by both sides, to our negotiations. Our bargaining committee met with him for about two hours to review all of the outstanding issues. He then shuttled between the parties, to help each side understand the other's position and hopefully move toward resolution.

We reached one tentative agreement on education leave and tuition reimbursement. The facilitator also got Kaiser to agree in concept (awaiting a written proposal) to investing resources into having Regional Professional Practice Committees for each discipline that actually meet, involve staff, and use interest-based processes. We also spent some time narrowing issues and expect to have several more tentative agreements when we meet next on April 16.

We are optimistic that this new collaborative approach will yield some positive results. However, we still know that the Southern California Kaiser management team we are meeting with is not making the decisions around wages and benefits, in particular the pension. The mediator also has no influence in this area. To convince the national Kaiser Leaders who control the purse strings, we will still have to demonstrate our unity and resolve by continuing our contract campaign. If you haven't already done so, we urge you to sign the strike authorization petition being circulated by stewards and our NUHW staff organizers.

OUR BARGAINING TEAM

Brandy Brent, Audiologist
Carla Yaldezian, Nephrology RD
Abigail Hankins, Speech Pathologist
Mia Hernandez, Lactation Consultant
Marla Simon, FANS RD
Turusew Gedebu-Wilson, Health Educator II