

KAISER PERMANENTE IBHS BARGAINING UPDATE

APRIL 25, 2019

AT A CROSSROADS

At the union's request, instead of having another non-productive bargaining session, we met with Senior Leadership of Northern California Kaiser. Attendees included Janet Liang, President and CEO of KFH and KFHP; Debbie Royalty, Chief Administrative Officer, TPMG; and Dr. Sameer Awsare, Associate Executive Director, TPMG – Primary Care, Pharmacy and Mental Health.

We respectfully told them how disillusioned we are with Kaiser's adversarial approach to bargaining. We entered bargaining expecting to have real dialogue and work together to address staffing, access, and recruitment and retention. We were met with Kaiser PR rhetoric, dismissal of our legitimate concerns, and outright rejection of most of our proposals. The process has greatly eroded the goodwill we have built over the last two years.

We talked about how insufficient staff and unsustainable workload keep patients from getting needed treatment. We showed how KP's strategies to improve initial access for mental health, such as IACs, C2C, and telephone intakes, have not helped to improve, and in some cases have worsened, access to treatment, with adverse outcomes for patients.

We also expressed appropriate outrage over KP's refusal to address many areas in our contract, economic and non-economic, that are below standards for other Kaiser employees. KP should not expect our members to be satisfied if the best they can offer is no more takeaways. We also made it clear our members will not accept KP's current proposals on provider profiles, as they are worse than what exist now.

KP leaders acknowledged Kaiser has a serious problem with return access, which it can solve only with the help of clinicians. Janet Liang was upset to hear that the new Fairfield clinic had opened with



no new staff. She said KP was committed to adding significant new resources for mental health staffing and that she would ensure in the future that funds designated for mental health are used for mental health. She reiterated KP's commitment to work collaboratively to make Kaiser the model for mental health care and the employer of choice, while acknowledging the trust needed to achieve this needs to be rebuilt.

We concluded with KP agreeing to engage in a different approach going forward. Tom Schneider will be a neutral facilitator. He has worked with our union and Kaiser for years and has recently been helpful in moving the process in Southern California. The parties have agreed the current format is not working, so we are exploring other possibilities, including a more comprehensive approach involving decision makers at all levels of the KP organization, as well as representatives from all of our Kaiser bargaining units.

While this is a good sign, much still has to happen for our bargaining team to be satisfied we are on the right path. In the meantime, we will continue to actively work with elected officials, community leaders and patients to shine a light on Kaiser's inadequate mental health services. With a supermajority of our members having already signed the strike authorization petition, we are also prepared to call for an open-ended strike, if needed.

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