

## Children's Hospital Oakland to shut locations during strike



Workers at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland plan to strike over what they say are pay cuts.

**By Catherine Ho**

Health care workers at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland plan to begin a five-day strike Wednesday over what they say are cuts in take-home pay under new union contracts slated to take effect in July.

Led by the National Union of Healthcare Workers, the picket line will take place outside the main hospital in Oakland and the outpatient center in Walnut Creek from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The hospital system's outpatient locations — in Walnut Creek, San Ramon, Brentwood and Emeryville — will largely be closed to in-person activities such as appointments and procedures.

Services at other locations may be limited, the hospital's website said. The emergency department at the main Oakland hospital will remain open to ambulances.

Elective surgeries and elective appointments will be rescheduled, and some in-person outpatient appointments will be converted to telehealth appointments, UCSF said. Patients will be notified directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should contact their provider's office if they have questions.

At issue are new union contracts that were established when UCSF acquired Children's Hospital Oakland in 2014. UCSF has since committed \$1.6 billion to modernize the East Bay pediatric facilities. Previously, workers at the children's hospital were employed by Children's Hospital Oakland, but they will now transition to UC employment on July 6.

As a result, many employees will be transferred to UC unions and will see reductions in take-home pay because they will be required to pay more toward health and retirement benefits.

Some workers, whose jobs are not represented by UC unions, will lose union representation altogether, said NUHW, which represents about 1,300 workers at the hospital including nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, housekeepers, clinical workers and medical technicians.

"The transition threatens to further restrict pediatric services in the East Bay, as workers consider leaving or retiring rather than starting over as UCSF employees with less pay, no seniority and a completely different pension plan," NUHW said in a statement.

UCSF said employees at Children's Hospital Oakland are joining the same public-sector unions that represent other UC employees across the state.

"This transition supports long-term growth, aligns our teams under a single system, and strengthens our ability to serve children and families with high-quality, coordinated care," UCSF said in a statement.