**KAISER CONTRACT CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

**April 30, 2019**

There are many new developments in our campaign to win good contracts with Kaiser that treat us and our patients fairly. Here’s the latest:

**Strike Authorization Update**

Over 80 percent of our members in both mental health units — Psych–Social in Southern California and IBHS in Northern California — have now signed the authorization for an open-ended strike, with more members signing every day. The results send an unmistakable message to Kaiser that it must get serious about bargaining fair contracts.

A majority of members in our Healthcare Professionals unit have also signed the petition, which authorizes our member-led bargaining committee to issue a 10-day notice of an open-ended strike if and when they determine it’s necessary. When the IBHS bargaining committee took this step in 2015, Kaiser settled a contract that preserved pensions without IBHS members having to hold an open-ended strike.

**Kaiser Families Meet With Tyson**

Just one week after patients — with support from mental health clinicians and community leaders — [gathered outside Kaiser headquarters](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fwatch%2F%3Fv%3D684972355251951), they got their audience with Kaiser CEO Bernard Tyson.

The April 25 face-to-face meeting was a huge victory for patients, several of whom have lost loved ones to suicide. Sonoma County Supervisor Shirlee Zane had waited years for the chance to meet with Tyson after he cancelled a scheduled meeting following her husband’s suicide.

The patients reported having a long discussion with Tyson and other executives. They made clear that Kaiser must work with its patients and clinicians to improve access to mental health care.

“We are grateful to NUHW members for helping us come together and get Kaiser to finally listen to us,” said Seong Brown, whose daughter Elizabeth died by suicide last year. “It means so much to know that we can help other families avoid the suffering we have endured, and we couldn’t have gotten to this point without the union’s support.”

Next steps include additional meetings with Kaiser executives and a follow-up meeting with Tyson. The families intend to include NUHW clinicians in future meetings.

**Pasadena Strike**

Mental health clinicians held [a one-day strike last Thursday](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fwatch%2F%3Fv%3D320290882002649) at Kaiser’s clinic in Pasadena where wait times for treatment appointments now exceed three months.

The clinic’s nearly two dozen therapists went on strike after Kaiser wouldn’t agree to increase staffing. Appointment wait times have roughly doubled in recent years.

Clinicians at the facility had been pressing Kaiser for over a year to address worsening conditions in Pasadena. Access to care has deteriorated to such an extent that just before the strike, therapists filed a complaint asking for an investigation by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences into the facility and its administrator, Ellise Taylor-Brebes, for failing to improve access to care. Click [here](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnuhw.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FNUHW-ComplaintVsPasadenaAMCA_4-24-19-1.pdf) to see the complaint.

**Kaiser Mental Health Access Survey**

Nearly 800 therapists in Kaiser’s Psychiatry departments answered a 10-question survey this month focused on access to individual treatment appointments. This survey allows us to counter Kaiser’s inaccurate statements and underscores the need to hire more staff. Below are several key findings. You can find the full results [here](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnuhw.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FNUHWs-2019-KP-Psych-Access-Survey-NCAL-SCAL.pdf):

* 71% of the respondents indicate that understaffing problems in their clinic have grown worse and that patients' wait times for treatment appointments have grown longer during the past two years.
* 94% of therapists disagree with the following statement: “Weekly individual psychotherapy appointments at your clinic are available to those who need it.” Of this total, 78% strongly disagree with this statement.
* 77% of respondents report that on a daily basis, they must schedule their patients’ return appointments further into the future than is clinically appropriate.

**Pension Fact Sheet**

We published a fact sheet detailing Kaiser’s massive double-standard regarding retirement benefits. Our bargaining committees have demanded that Kaiser restore the defined-benefit pension plan for all of our therapists and professionals in Southern California.

To fully understand the pension issue, click [here](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnuhw.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FNUHW-ComplaintVsPasadenaAMCA_4-24-19-1.pdf).

Also, check out our pension calculator to see the difference between a 401(k) and a defined-benefit pension: [NUHW.org/calculator](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnuhw.org%2Fcalculator%2F).

**Television Ads**

This month, we began airing cable television ads in the Washington, D.C. area calling attention to Kaiser’s repeated violations of mental health laws. We expect the ads will be viewed by federal lawmakers and regulators, who have authority to oversee Kaiser’s delivery of mental health care.

Our [first commercial](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DEDeZRu_L9uQ%26feature%3Dyoutu.be) ran last week during MSNBC’s Morning Joe. The [second ad](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dth8nKdjozQk%26feature%3Dyoutu.be) is running this week.

We are also running [this ad](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fwatch%2F%3Fv%3D324299621611290) on social media.

**San Francisco Resolution**

The 11-member San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed [a resolution](http://community.nuhw.org/links?lid=kOs-wrBGGCArJ26paYaNvQ&token=cGI8VSv2Jr1IGqMVItuPAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fsfgov.legistar.com%2FView.ashx%3FM%3DF%26ID%3D7181836%26GUID%3D8A94D5EF-C83C-474D-B0F8-CA20BFDC17EF) on April 23 calling on Kaiser Permanente to achieve “full parity for mental health patients.”

The resolution, introduced by Supervisor Hillary Ronen, also calls on Kaiser to sufficiently staff mental health clinics to reduce lengthy appointment wait times; limit wait times to no more than ten days for return appointments for most patients; and strictly limit Kaiser’s practice of referring out more than 60,000 California patients per year to non-Kaiser therapists who often lack access to patients’ medical records and can’t coordinate their care with Kaiser doctors.

Kaiser officials pushed hard behind the scenes to defeat the resolution and spoke against it during the meeting. But they still couldn’t muster a single vote.

“The mental health crisis in our city impacts every resident at every economic level,” Ronen said. “As the largest private provider of mental health care, Kaiser must ensure access to timely mental health care and early treatment to all its members.”

The resolution puts supervisors on record supporting proposals made by Kaiser’s nearly 4,000 NUHW-represented psychologists, therapists, social workers and other healthcare professionals. We expect other cities and counties to consider similar resolutions in the coming weeks.