

Kaiser Contract Campaign Update December 1, 2019

More than 160 stewards from our IBHS, Psych-Social and Healthcare Professionals units voted nearly unanimously Saturday to call a five-day strike beginning Monday, Dec. 16. Saturday's strike vote came after Kaiser's mediator Tom Schneider failed last week to deliver "a comprehensive, significant change" to Kaiser's previous settlement proposal.

Kaiser's proposal, which they were supposed to provide last Sunday, but finally submitted on Wednesday afternoon, contained minor wage improvements. But it did NOT:

- 1) Restore pensions
- 2) Provide the same fees for medical services that Kaiser provides for other union employees.
- 3) Provide 3 percent across-the-board cost of living increases.
- 4) Make cost-of-living wage increases retroactive to the expiration of our contract last year.
- 5) Agree to provide five hours of indirect patient care time for mental health clinicians in Southern California or unambiguously agree to 20 percent indirect patient care time in Northern California. (The Northern California proposal floated the idea of 20 percent indirect patient care time, but only when paired with a new productivity measure that we would need to discuss further in face-to-face negotiations.)

On Monday, we will provide a detailed side-by-side comparison of Kaiser's latest proposal and our most recent proposal for settlement.

I received a message Saturday from Gov. Newsom. He continues to be on our side and will let Kaiser executives know that NUHW members perform crucial work and deserve a fair contract with at least the same benefits and at least the same wage structure as other Kaiser employees.

While we have strong political support, Kaiser's actions over the past week demonstrate that we must continue to push harder to make them treat us fairly and take significant steps toward achieving mental health parity.

Kaiser's mediator Tom Schneider informed me Friday, Nov. 22 that interim CEO Greg Adams was determined to settle our contracts and was directly involving himself in hammering out an agreement.

According to Schneider, Adams told him: "We have to settle this fight — members lives are at stake. We have to work together." Schneider told me that Adams needed "a few days" to produce a settlement agreement and get buy-in from top doctors, and asked that we not authorize a strike while the settlement proposal was being finalized.

That evening, Schneider sent me this text:

"High probability that I will have a comprehensive significant change supposal* this weekend that management can accept for North and South all units for agreement to send to you by Sunday PM. Have to get various management players to agree but have some critical support. Made clear your position. Nothing final for certain but guardedly positive. Important not to strike threat for next few days until I get their commitment. Very very important to hold off for now."

** A supposal is a proposal floated across the table as a suggestion to the other side.*

Our stewards had planned to authorize a five-day strike starting Dec. 16 last Saturday. But they agreed to hold off as an act of good faith knowing they could still authorize it if Kaiser's settlement proposal did not achieve our goals.

At this point, we need to be fully committed to having a successful five-day strike later this month. The more support we demonstrate for the strike, the more pressure Kaiser will feel to return to the bargaining table and begin negotiating in good faith.

Given the resistance we have seen from the Northern and Southern Permanente Medical Groups, particularly to providing enough time for indirect patient care and wage and benefit parity, stewards asked for contact information for the leaders of both organizations: Edward Ellison and Richard Isaacs.

Many stewards want to make clear to them that Kaiser shouldn't discriminate against any employees and that clinicians need sufficient time to perform all of their patient care duties. Others are welcome to deliver their own messages to the doctors.

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In Unity,

Sal Rosselli, President

National Union of Healthcare Workers