



NUHW PULSE

Richmond Area Multi-Services

March 2024

MARCH 2024



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT SALOTE LUTUI

Mental Health Specialist

As a Pacific Islander, Mental Health Specialist Salote Lutui enjoys a good game of rugby, so she doesn't miss her nephews' games on the weekends. Spending time with family is one of the ways she stays grounded outside of work, where she treats an underserved population, many of whom share her own background.

"It's a special role to serve your community and to also serve other people of color," Lutui said. "The struggles are the same across all people of color and there's so much need."

Lutui also appreciates the fact that she gets to work alongside and serve other Pacific Islanders in Alameda County.

"I love the people that I work with and the population that I serve," she said. "We have an understanding of the culture. And it's rare to work along other Pacific Islanders. To have them under one roof, it's a blessing."

Recently, Lutui decided to become an NUHW steward to help improve her

continued on back

MID-CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS COMING UP



In 2022, we won unprecedented raises as a part of a committed effort to demand management bring us up to market-rate salaries. Salary increases ranged from 3 percent to 43 percent, with the average hike around 21 percent.

That agreement also included the understanding that we would reopen the contract in 2024 to negotiate an additional increase starting this July.

Winning bigger raises will require building on the strength and unity we demonstrated last year.

This means that some departments where we do not have active union leadership must step up and support the rest of the workers, offering their opinion and voices in the negotiating table.

These departments include AOP (Adult Outpatient), CAAP (County Adult Assistance Program)

continued on back

OUR CONTRACT

To review our contract booklet, visit nuhw.org/rams-contract

ATTEND JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS: HAVE A SAY IN YOUR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Management intends to review and consolidate positions, and it is our duty to make sure they are not misrepresenting our duties and responsibilities.

If you want to ensure the descriptions for those in Salary Band 3 and Salary Band 4 are accurate, join these meetings that are held **every second Tuesday of the month** via Zoom.

To access the Zoom meeting, visit **www.nuhw.org/rams-lmcmeeting**.

Our input is important and can make the difference for us and our co-workers."

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT SALOTE LUTUI

continued from front

workplace so that she and her colleagues can provide the best possible care.

"I thought it was important to make a better working environment for all those who come through the door," she said.

Now she's reading the contract booklet and familiarizing herself with all the union processes.

She likes the fact that she gets a say in something that impacts many of her co-workers: ensuring that job descriptions fit the role of mental health specialists. "There's so much stuff to learn, but I like to know that my feedback is being considered," she said. "It's great to make change and pave the way for other people to be in this type of role."

There are many other things Lutui believes need to be upgraded at work, and she's ready to help empower her colleagues to make positive change. "I'm the less fortunate. I know what it means to not have a voice in those spaces," she said. "I stand up for those who don't have that voice. I'm that voice for them."

Negotiations

continued from front

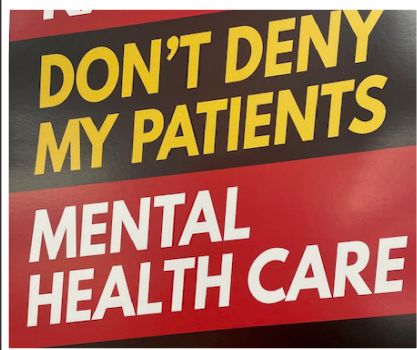
and Fu Yau (Fu Yau Childhood Early Intervention Project).

There's no limit to the size of our bargaining committee. The larger the committee, the stronger we'll be at the bargaining table. We need every department represented.

We'll launch bargaining committee nominations soon, so think about who you want to represent your department at the bargaining table, where we will need to make some important decisions that will affect all of us.

If you have any questions, reach out to our union representative or our department stewards.

NUHW SPONSORS NEW MENTAL HEALTH PARITY BILLS



NUHW is teaming up with Assemblymember Gail Pellerin (D-Santa Cruz) on two bills that would help state regulators better enforce recent mental health parity laws and help patients advocate for their rights.

AB 3221 would help the Department of Managed Health Care better enforce state law by removing roadblocks that have made it difficult for the agency to conduct effective investigations.

AB 3260 would empower patients seeking mental health care to fight for their rights and win grievances when their health plan denies them appropriate care.

The bills, which are both sponsored by NUHW, are designed to hold health plans accountable for abiding by the groundbreaking mental health laws NUHW helped pass through its work with State Senator Scott Wiener.

"The recent \$200 million Kaiser settlement documents that health plans are out of compliance with parity laws," NUHW President Sal Rosselli said. "We've worked with patients and regulators to understand how health plans are getting around the law, and now we're working with our allies in Sacramento to

close those loopholes."

To strengthen the Department of Managed Health Care's oversight of health plans, such as Kaiser, SB 3221 would allow the agency to:

- Request health plan records in a searchable digital format, allowing for faster receipt and review of records.
- Take disciplinary action when health plans fail to respond to records fully or in a timely manner.
- Seek relief on behalf of consumers through administrative hearings rather than through the slower Superior Court hearing process that is currently required.

To ensure that patients have timely access to the care they're legally required to receive, AB 3260:

- Prohibits health plans and disability insurers from overriding a provider's determination that a patient (consumer) requires urgent care.
- Allows consumers to file grievances immediately if their health plans or disability insurers fail to respond to their claims within the time period and in the manner required under state law.
- Requires health plans and disability insurers to automatically resolve grievances in favor of the consumer if they don't respond within the legally-required timeframe of 72 hours for urgent cases and 30 days for non-urgent cases.
- Increases transparency and expands due process rights for consumers who file complaints with state regulators over improper denials or lack of access to care.



NUHW GEAR
NUHW.org/store



ONLINE CE
NUHW.org/CE



NUHW NEWS
NUHW.org/pulse

