Kaiser will return to contract talks with union of 2,000-plus mental health workers in CA

Kaiser Permanente reached out to striking mental health clinicians to request bargaining sessions on Thursday and Friday, saying the company remains committed to reaching a fair and equitable agreement that's good for our members, our patients and our community.

The company also noted that its last proposal included a $13 thousand, retroactive cash payment to each striking clinician. The proposal also included a $6,300 signing bonus as part of an economic proposal presented the weekend before the strike, including an increase in the minimum starting salary for health care providers as well as an investment $30 million to build a pipeline to educate and train new mental health professionals across the state.

We have significantly expanded our ability to invest in mental health care amid the strike. Consumers can reach the DMHC at 888-466-2219 or at

The company also said its last proposal had addressed the union's concerns about turnover in its behavioral health workers. Kaiser has said that turnover in its behavioral health services unit is no greater than in other areas of the organization or in the medical group.

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Ken Rogers, a Kaiser psychologist who practices in Elk Grove, said the 3% increase in what Kaiser is calling "administrative work" would be an "incremental thing" for his team. "It's a very small amount of additional work, and we're very grateful for that," he said.

Because the insurer does not have enough therapists, Rogers and others have said they've been forced to work harder to fill gaps in their treatment programs. Kaiser has said that its last proposal included a $13 thousand, retroactive cash payment to each striking clinician. The proposal also included a $6,300 signing bonus as part of an economic proposal presented the weekend before the strike.

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"We're determined to improve working conditions that have caused many of their members to leave Kaiser in large numbers over the past year," Baleno said.

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