

Speak Out Now in Healthcare

A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers

January 29th, 2025

Norovirus at John George: A Shitty Situation

John George Psychiatric Hospital is currently dealing with a norovirus outbreak, leading to widespread cases of vomiting and diarrhea among patients. Highly contagious infections like norovirus can spread rapidly in enclosed spaces like hospitals, but this is precisely why management should anticipate and prepare for such outbreaks.

So, how did this outbreak persist for weeks before staff were informed? Why did units run out of electrolyte drinks, a basic necessity for keeping patients hydrated? And why weren't stronger precautions implemented to curb the spread, especially given that norovirus isn't killed by standard hand sanitizer?

These unanswered questions point to a troubling lack of preparedness. Proper protocols, timely communication, and elevated infection-control measures could have mitigated this crisis. When dealing with such a preventable issue, patients and staff deserve better.

Kaiser Mental Health Workers Strike Reaches 100 Days While Fires Blaze

This Tuesday, January 28th, marks the 100th day that Kaiser Southern California mental health workers have been on strike. Kaiser management and the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), the union representing striking mental health workers, have not shown any signs of being close to signing an agreement, though bargaining has resumed this month for the first time since October.

In the meantime, Kaiser mental health workers have continued fighting on the picket line. They persist in their demands for higher wages, increased staffing, longer break times, and improved pension benefits.

The ongoing strike has created a critical gap in mental health care at the same time Los Angeles has been devastated by the recent wildfires. Due to Kaiser management's insistence on not meeting the workers' demands, many therapy patients experiencing trauma from the effects of the recent fires have not been able to see their normal therapist.

The intersection of these events -- a healthcare workers' strike and devastating wildfires -- show how ordinary working people suffer under capitalism. This system cares about profit above all else -- even if it means halting access to mental healthcare or destroying the environment.

Still Waiting to Get Paid

As of January 2023, California law requires that public hospital employers pay an additional one hour of penalty pay every time they force nurses to work through their shifts without meal or rest breaks.

Alameda Health System nurses wrote this mandate explicitly into their union contract last year, including that the penalty pay must be paid in the paycheck in which the missed break occurs. However, many months later, nurses are still not being paid on time for their missed meals and breaks!

Management states that the payments will be calculated and paid in a lump sum at a later date - a plan that is in direct conflict with the contract they agreed to last year. Nurses not only have to work long shifts with no breaks due to management's short staffing, they now also have to file grievances simply to be paid correctly. Management needs to stop the delays and pay nurses on time!



Join us at our next event to discuss Trump's attacks on immigrants and our response



Immigrants Are Welcome Here!
Sunday, February 2nd, 4pm
6501 Telegraph Ave, Oakland



speakoutsocialists.org

IG: @sonsocialists

