

Speak Out Now in Healthcare

A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers

March 12th, 2024

Kaiser PSP “Bonus” - Getting Back a Portion of What We Give

Unlike last year, we are getting our PSP (performance sharing plan) payout for 2023. But let's not get it twisted - this bonus is not Kaiser doing us any favors.

After all, we are the reason Kaiser made ANY profit last year. It is OUR care and OUR efforts that make the system run. This bonus is just us taking back a tiny bit of the wealth that we generate for this healthcare giant.

It's Survey Time at Highland

It's that time again at Alameda Health System to complete the SCORE Culture of Safety Survey. Unfortunately, despite our annual attempts to diligently report our workplace safety concerns via this survey, management consistently ignores the survey results.

Every year the survey reveals abysmal ratings that are then glossed over in a meeting with no plan to fix the critical problems we have identified! It is clear management is just using these surveys to check off a Joint Commission requirement, with no intention to address workers' legitimate concerns.

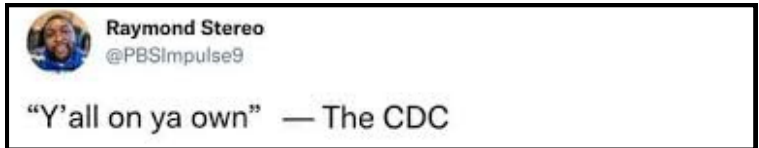
As always, many of us will carefully fill out our surveys, but let's not get our hopes up and expect more out of it than an entry in the T-shirt raffle.

New CDC Guidelines Say Go Back to Work!

The CDC announced on March 1 it is lifting its recommendation to isolate for 5 days after testing positive for COVID. It now recommends "returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication." These recommendations may be consistent with other respiratory illnesses, but it has been shown that COVID is more transmissible, and is still hospitalizing and killing more people than the flu (per CDC data). It additionally poses a much greater risk to older individuals and those with certain medical conditions, not to mention the still-unknown consequences of long-COVID.

What these new guidelines may do is encourage people to go back to work before they are fully recovered, especially if they do not have paid time off or adequate sick pay. There they could potentially infect others, including vulnerable populations, who may not be as lucky to catch a mild case.

So when the CDC tells us we can quickly return to "normal activities," we know what they are really telling us to do - get back to work!



The Nightmare of the Varied Shift

At Highland it has become increasingly more common to hire workers as a "varied shift." Meaning, instead of having a consistently scheduled workweek, management has the power to decide when we work. It is hard to plan your life when you don't know your hours or schedule, and can get put on back-to-back weekends.

And then when these shifts remain unfilled, management has the audacity to say that we're understaffed because no one wants to apply. But of course - who wants their schedule to be so unpredictable! And why? So the bosses can cut costs by squeezing us into the schedule where they have the most need, instead of keeping us fully staffed at all times.

Once again, management does not fail in making decisions that completely benefit them at the expense of our well-being. Which only means more impossible schedules and headaches for us and our coworkers.

