

# Speak Out Now in Healthcare

*A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers*

March 12, 2025

## Another Year, Another Ignored Concern

It's that time of year again where management adds yet another task to our shifts - the annual SCORE Culture of Safety Survey. We'd be thrilled if they were actually interested in our feedback about our workplace, but unfortunately this survey just checks the box for a Joint Commission requirement.

Every year, we thoughtfully complete the survey, hoping that this year's abysmal rankings might prompt management to action. However, no matter how low we score our workplace safety, or our management's handling of our safety concerns, nothing ever changes. Management is satisfied with addressing the survey results through an "action plan" that includes a webinar or a PowerPoint, while ignoring the root causes of our safety concerns, such as safe staffing and realistic workloads.

Although our concerns are real and important to discuss, don't expect the SCORE Survey to lead to real changes in the workplace. That will take action from us.

## Our Time, Their Terms

Why is it that we're required to submit our schedules for the entire year a full 12 months in advance, yet our employer consistently fails to meet us halfway? We're expected to plan our lives around rigid, inflexible timelines, but when it comes to addressing our needs—fair wages, reasonable workloads, or even basic respect—suddenly there's no urgency.

This one-sided approach leaves us scrambling to balance our work and lives while management reaps the benefits of our predictability.



## 3,000 Voices Ignored: AHS Continues Layoffs

Alameda Health System is still planning to lay off cashiers at Highland and Fairmont, despite a huge showing of support for these workers through a petition that circulated the hospital and received over 3,000 signatures. Management claims that self-checkout kiosks are a way to modernize the hospital, but we know that this is a load of BS.

The new tablets won't accept cash, which will prevent multiple people from buying food. Plus this technology can be confusing, which will result in many putting food back or simply walking away with it. AHS is also planning to do more subcontracting by supplying more pre-packaged meals, and has already eliminated some grill shifts. Staff and patients deserve fresh, quality meals, not more packaged foods (that are sometimes already going bad)!

In response, staff and community members are planning on demonstrating their support at the next Board of Trustees meeting at Highland. Management has shown they don't care about patients or workers - so it'll be up to us to protect our cashiers!

## Oregon Nurses Achieve Significant Wins!

At the beginning of January, nurses at eight Providence hospitals across the state of Oregon went on strike. The strike lasted more than a month and a half, as management initially failed to meet the nurses' demands. However, the nurses' perseverance led to pay raises, retroactive pay for missed breaks for workers who have been at some hospitals before 2024, and compensation for future missed breaks.

The new contract also addresses staffing issues. It now requires staffing levels to be adjusted according to the severity of patient care needs. Additionally, at hospitals such as Medford, nurses at the unit level will have the power to agree with or reject proposed staffing plans before they are submitted to the hospital's staffing committee.

This hard-fought victory is just the beginning. The nurses' success in negotiating better pay and staffing conditions demonstrates their determination. While there are still areas, such as healthcare coverage, where demands have not been met and further action is needed, the solidarity and strength they've built during this strike will help them continue to fight for better working conditions. Their success is an inspiring example of worker power and solidarity.



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