

# Speak Out Now in Healthcare

A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers

September 17th, 2024

## AHS's Neglect Costs Patients Their Appetites

Inpatient meals have been getting served on disposable takeout containers at Highland for the last few weeks. No warmed plates means food is cold, soggy, and not a reflection of the food that patients usually like.

The reason? A broken dishwasher that should have been replaced months ago! While many staff had complained about issues with the machine, it was never properly fixed or replaced. So unsurprisingly it broke down, in a scene of dramatics, and now is so far gone it likely *has* to be replaced.

This is what happens when AHS doesn't pay to fix things right the first time. Patients end up paying the price.

## Everybody Deserves Rest!

Working at a hospital, where the short-staffing crisis is an everyday reality, takes a toll on your body. It's hard not to think about the years remaining until retirement becomes a reality. However, with inflation driving up food and housing costs while our salaries fail to keep pace, retirement seems increasingly distant. In fact, all across the board, people are working way past retirement because they can't afford to live in the Bay Area on their pension... if they even get a pension at all.

This shouldn't be the case! Our bodies and minds aren't designed to endure the stress, responsibility, and hard work demanded by our jobs for so many years. Everyone deserves rest and the opportunity to enjoy life. As healthcare workers, so do we!

## Capitalism Pushes Workers and Patients to the Brink

It takes personal strength and dedication to work in a hospital, caring for people who are suffering through what are often the worst days of their lives. In a normal shift, a nurse might comfort a grieving mother, hold the hand of a frightened patient preparing for surgery, or quietly wheel a body down to the morgue.

Witnessing all this suffering and loss takes an emotional toll on healthcare workers, regardless of the cause. But why are so many people sick and injured in our society? Every hospital worker knows that it is not simply the result of natural illness and tragic accidents. Most of these hospitalizations are the result of people being pushed so far to the margins of society that they can no longer physically survive without medical intervention.

Every day, more and more people are living without access to nutritious food, adequate shelter, or reliable healthcare. As capitalism churns out higher and higher profits for billionaires, more people at the bottom are left unable to meet their basic needs. A society defined by such inherent instability can't help but see increases in illness, addiction, and unsafe living conditions.

Healthcare workers bear witness to this injustice every time they clock in. They can either harden their hearts and lose all sense of purpose in their work, or risk becoming too emotionally burdened to stay in the profession. Either way, we need to remember that the suffering we witness is an inevitable consequence of our capitalist system.

We need to dismantle the current system and build a society that restores and supports the health of our whole community.



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