

Speak Out Now at Highland

September 23rd 2026

Is Surge Black the New Normal?

A few months ago, most of us at Highland had never heard of “surge black,” although we knew the hospital often met “surge red” criteria. Now we're seeing more surge black days in the emergency department.

According to AHS's description, “surge black” means the hospital is critically over capacity, and that we do not have the resources to meet patients' needs. This is considered an internal disaster scenario, and should obviously be a very rare situation.

Unfortunately, as we're seeing, this is starting to become a regular occurrence in the ED. Research shows that when an emergency department is overcrowded, healthcare quality goes down and more patients die. Some patients give up on waiting, and leave the ED, only to get sicker at home. More violence also occurs in overcrowded hospitals, and both patient and worker satisfaction plummets.

Highland is a busy hospital, but we can't accept surge black as the new normal! Highland workers and patients deserve a hospital that is functional and safe, not always in disaster mode.

Cychlorphine: Capitalism's Latest Opiod

A new drug has been detected on the streets of San Francisco, and it has already taken the life of a 16 year old. The drug is Cychlorphine, and it is a new synthetic opioid 10 times more potent than fentanyl.

Health care workers have seen the lethal and devastating impacts of narcotics on human beings and communities. It is hard to imagine that drugs could be any more harmful than they already are.

But under this capitalist system where people work more than ever before for less, it is no surprise that the drugs people turn to for relief have become ever more dangerous.

SPEAK OUT SOCIALISTS FUTURE EVENTS

**SAT 10/3
1PM**

**MINNESOTA 15 DEFENSE
RALLY & OUTREACH**
Lake Merritt Pergola
National Day of Action in solidarity for the Minneapolis
15, activists who stood up against ICE.

**WED 10/21
6:30PM**

**TOWN HALL: ELECTIONS, VOTER
SUPPRESSION, & OUR RESPONSE**
Niebyl Proctor Library

**THU 10/29
6:30PM**

**PUBLIC EVENT: “WHEN THE ICE
MELTS” SCREENING**
Berkeley City College
Auditorium

**SUN 12/13
6PM**

**SPEAK OUT SOCIALISTS
HOLIDAY CELEBRATION**

Dishwashing Disaster

The dishwasher at Highland is not working, meaning patients have been getting their food served in takeout containers. This prevents food from staying warm, and is reducing the quality of patient's meals. A good meal is sometimes the highlight of patient's days while admitted at Highland.

Yet, the cafeteria now has a new vending machine that is supposed to be up and running soon... Why is the nutrition department wasting money on new technologies rather than fixing the essential machinery they already have?

Is their drive to make money from gimmicks like this new vending machine stronger than their desire to provide good patient care?

Why the Smelly Stairs?

Hospitals are one of the few places you expect to be clean and sanitary. So why do our stairwells smell like rotting trash?

Is there a sewage gas leak from improperly maintained pipes? Is there something wrong with the plumbing? Should we be concerned about our safety?

Whatever it is, hospital workers and patients should not be punished by the smell of sewage when they take the stairs!



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Speak Out Now

September 21, 2026

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We Must Stand Up Against Their Blatant Attacks on our Lives

It couldn't be any clearer that this is a society openly run in the interests of the corporations and the billionaires. Their agenda includes cutting social services for the poor, cutting taxes for the super rich, waging wars, destroying the environment, attacking immigrants, and trying to criminalize those who stand up to them. They don't even try to hide it, doing it all out in the open, and making it increasingly clear for people to see and choose a side.

The U.S. war on Iran has unleashed a new wave of devastation across the Middle East, claiming tens of thousands of lives and displacing millions more. It has worsened the economic struggles of ordinary people in this country and around the world. Diesel prices recently hit an all-time high, with an average of \$6.29 per gallon, up 68% since the U.S. war on Iran began. And because diesel powers much of the economy (trains, tractors, trucks), those costs keep pushing up prices for food, goods, and anything that requires shipping.

At the same time, the U.S. continues to back the Israeli genocide in Gaza, which continues despite corporate news channels trying to keep it off the news. Even as Palestinians face mass starvation, the U.S. is helping Israel accelerate the genocide by providing Israel with a \$2.8 billion weapons package of 40,000 bombs, one of the largest weapons provisions in recent years.

The headlines around artificial intelligence (AI) also keep getting worse. There are warnings that AI will lead to massive layoffs, greater environmental destruction, intensifying global conflicts, and increasing risk that AI technology could get out of control and put humanity at risk. Meanwhile, the Trump administration is lowering the regulations on power plant emissions to allow unregulated gas plants to power the AI boom.

As life becomes increasingly difficult for working people, the corporations, Trump and the billionaires can't even hide how much money they are making. Trump's personal income increased by about 350% in his first year back in office — from \$622 million in 2024 to \$2.2 billion in 2025, making it the largest financial gain for any president in U.S. history. This is open corruption by using his power as president to enrich himself. And, since Trump's second term began, U.S. billionaires increased their wealth by 22% in 2025 alone, gaining \$1.5 trillion in just one year. Meanwhile, since 2025, working class

households have been paying about \$350 extra per month just to keep up with the rising cost of living.

But in the face of these blatant attacks, it is getting easier to see this society for what it is — a war on ordinary people here and around the world in order to enrich the very few at the top. It is increasingly clear that we cannot leave the future in the hands of billionaires who profit from destruction. It is becoming more urgent for people to choose a side, take a stand, and speak out.

Recently, AI researcher Jacob Coxon resigned from the AI company Anthropic to warn the world that the industry is moving too rapidly, and that companies could soon build AI that humans cannot control, which could put all of humanity at risk. Coxon was willing to walk away from his high-paying job and risk retaliation to send the warning that even those building these systems fear how they will be used under this system of profit, war, and destruction.

And last week, when rapper Macklemore took the stage in New Jersey and declared support for Palestine during an Ed Sheeran tour, NFL stadium owners united to pressure Sheeran into removing him from the remaining dates. Robert Kraft, billionaire owner of the New England Patriots, led the effort to threaten him into silence.

But Macklemore refused to be silenced, and defended why he stood with Palestine and against genocide. Since then, other artists on the tour have followed suit, dropping out rather than remaining silent, choosing to side with Palestinians instead of those who defend genocide.

Aaron Rowe, an Irish singer who was opening for Sheeran on the tour, dropped out and had this to say: *"as Irish people we know all too well about genocide, forced famine and violent occupation. I cannot stand by and allow billionaires to use their position of power to silence the rightful voices of those who speak up against Israeli genocide and who highlight the savage murder of children. I would lose all respect for myself to carry on as normal."*

Rowe's words are for all of us. We cannot let the people in power continue driving us down this path while putting our futures in jeopardy. Every day they maintain control, the greater the threat they pose. The billionaires and politicians who have led us down this path cannot be trusted to get us out of their mess. The situation we face is not easy, but it is pushing more and more people to take a stand in opposition to the powerful. Others can begin to take a stand too. The future is up to us!