

Decision Makers are Often Faceless

Highland Hospital is one of the main hospitals in Oakland where people from all backgrounds come for different emergencies. However, even though this is a high need hospital, there's usually a staff and bed shortage. Patients have to wait a long time to be seen, many times in excruciating pain.

Workers, who don't have control over staffing levels, often have to delay or skip lunch in order to take care of patients. In some cases, we just take our lunch while on shift. And the long waits result in upset and frustrated patients, who usually take it out on us, since we are the face of the healthcare system.

At the end of the day, the people who are actually responsible for understaffing – management – never face any consequences. If we had a healthcare system where workers, those of us who actually run the day-to-day logistics of the hospital, got to make decisions, we would ensure proper staffing and better patient care.

First We Pay for Parking, Then We Pay for Food

We already spend so much of our time at work, or getting to and from work. So for most of us, preparing meals to eat at work is a whole other job in itself.

While the cafeteria food isn't unreasonably priced, paying for food every day really adds up. And as far as takeout options within walking distance – they are few and far in between. On a lucky day, you and your coworkers order delivery together. But again, the cost of eating at work really adds up!

However, not all workers at Highland have this dilemma. Most doctors and those who work in the food and nutrition department get their meals comped. These workers certainly deserve to eat in the cafeteria for free – but so should everyone else! If we have to be at work for 8-12 hours every day, we shouldn't have to stress over meal prep or spend money to sustain ourselves... just so we can keep on working!



The Violence of Abandonment

As one of the few trauma centers in the Bay Area, it is almost a daily occurrence for patients to come into Highland's ER with gunshot wounds. The victims of this violence are frequently young black and brown men. Often times people place responsibility on these patients because some of them are in gangs. Even when this is the case, are they truly to blame for this violence?

Just in Oakland, low income, black and brown youth are given fewer opportunities for their futures – all kinds of training programs for trades have been defunded and closed over the years, and college costs too much. At the end of the day, these young adults have limited options and as a result many don't feel needed.

In this system that cares more about profit than people's lives, these young men are told again and again that there is no place for them in this society. So many do what they have to do to survive. Instead of judging the victims, every gunshot patient we receive should be a reminder of the inadequacy of this society to protect and provide for people.

“Quiet Quitting” is Just the Beginning

The phrase “quiet quitting” has been blowing up all over social media, and has corporate productivity specialists freaking out. Most self-described “quiet quitters” aren't quitting their jobs – rather they are quitting the idea of continuously going above and beyond at work. They are trying to reject the idea that their worth as a person is only defined by their workplace productivity.

Work is often the place where we spend most of our adult lives, constantly working, creating wealth for the bosses so that we can survive. It is usually difficult and draining, and for most workers, it is often unfulfilling – or worse it leaves us with less and less time to enjoy our lives.

Refusing to go above and beyond is a first individual step to resisting this exploitation. This individual step is able to take a much more powerful form when we are able to move from individual acts of resistance to collective ones, by organizing and fighting back together – from small-group acts of resistance at work to full-blown strikes.

In this light, “Quiet quitting” can be the beginning of our individual resistance to the exploitation of capitalism. But it cannot be the end of it. If we want to live fulfilling lives, and not just live only to go to work, we will have to loudly quit this system altogether.