

# Speak Out Now in Healthcare

A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers

October 30th, 2024

## Healthcare Plans: Too Confusing, Too Costly

Open enrollment for health insurance at Highland ended on Monday. We had just two weeks to decide which healthcare plan is right for us and our families. This is not enough time to decipher the various plans and make an informed decision on which plan makes the most sense - they're so confusing! If you forgot to update your choice during this time, you're stuck with the same policy from last year, and whatever changes come with it.

This year, premiums (the amount you pay each month) have gone slightly down. But they are still too damn expensive. And for some policies, the deductibles (the amount you have to pay before insurance kicks in) have gone up. Out-of-pocket maxes may have also increased.

We can't provide good care if we can't get good care for ourselves. Healthcare should be free, high-quality, and accessible to all. Our lives, and our patients' lives, depend on it.

## Highland Management Cheats Nurses

Nurses throughout Highland have found that not only is management often not providing them meal and rest breaks, they are not paying the appropriate compensation for those missed breaks!

If there is not a break nurse to cover your meal or rest breaks, you are supposed to be paid ONE HOUR of pay for each missed break. This is in our union contract and is also California state law. Nurses deserve to be able to take meal and rest breaks during our 12 hour shifts. If management can't provide us with break coverage, the least they can do is follow the law and pay us our legally-owed compensation. Check your paystubs and make sure you're not being cheated!

## Upcoming Event: Their Elections are Over, Our Future Is Up to Us

Henry Ramsey Jr. Center  
2939 Ellis Street, Berkeley



Sunday November 17th @ 4 pm

## Update: Kaiser Mental Health Workers Strike

As the second week of the strike unfolds, over 2,400 Kaiser mental health workers in Southern California continue their fight for better wages and working conditions. The strike, led by the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), comes in response to ongoing issues like high turnover rates, short staffing, and minimal break times between patient appointments.

This situation mirrors the strike of mental health workers in Northern California two years ago, who managed to win more paid prep time between appointments and commitments to better staffing. Even if the strike of two years ago failed to address all of mental health workers' needs, it still resulted in some gains. However, these improvements were not extended to their Southern California counterparts, thus leading to the current strike.

Kaiser's refusal to apply those gains to Southern California, and the ongoing strike, highlights how the fight for more dignity is a constant, continuous struggle. This strike serves as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when we unite to advocate for better conditions—not just for ourselves, but for our colleagues and patients. The fight is far from over, but hopefully this can become an example of what it means to stand up to the ongoing nightmare of bosses' abuses, short staffing, and overwork, to come together and say enough is enough!



*"I am in costume. I'm here as a nurse who gets weekends and holidays off, and works regular 9-5 hours."*



[speakoutsocialists.org](https://speakoutsocialists.org)

IG: @sonsocialists

