Speak Out Now at Highland

November 4th, 2026

Healthcare Costs Have Gone Up!

It's health insurance enrollment season. So workers across the nation need to get out magnifying glasses and fine tooth combs so we can thoroughly read through these complicated policies, and try to make sure we are not getting completely screwed. Spoiler alert: no health insurance plan is good enough for any of us.

Enrollment season at Alameda Health System has just come to an end, and those of us reading very closely were appalled, but not really shocked, that some of our healthcare prices have once again gone up! 2026 has been a year of attacks on our healthcare system and AHS workers. So it should probably be no surprise that as this year comes to an end, we will need to cough up even more money to the coffers.

It is also enrollment season for those using Covered California, the free state-run service to help residents get health insurance, established in 2014 under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). 4.5% of Californian residents use the insurance and if you qualify, 4 out of 5 will get financial assistance toward their monthly premium. Total shocker: premiums are going up all over the nation, including for Covered California. Many immigrants will no longer be able to apply for subsidies if they qualify for Covered California. Tighter security is also expected to be implemented when applying for this health insurance.

It turns out that the Affordable Care Act is just another example of tinkering with a very broken capitalist system. What do we need? A total rehaul of our health care system so that all are guaranteed health care. It is a human right.

Coffee Shop Blues

Morning Rounds, the Highland coffee shop, is a detour many of us make daily to get our necessary caffeine fix. You're always greeted by a friendly face and treated to whatever new fun drink the baristas have come up with.

Sadly, the coffee shop is closed most of this week and will remain closed next week. There will be no lattes, matcha, Celsius drinks, or breakfast pastries to get us through the day over most of the next two weeks.

We can blame short staffing for the closure. And it's a chain reaction - when the cafeteria is short staffed, workers get pulled from the coffee shop to work downstairs.

This may not be the most concerning effect of short staffing we face here at the hospital, but it's a reminder that short staffing in one department has ripple effects across all of us. And while keeping patients healthy and safe is our priority, the people doing that work deserve a little joy in their day, too.

Highland ICE Update

Last week at the County Board of Supervisors' meeting, we learned that Alameda Health System administrators allowed ICE agents to keep a patient in custody at the hospital for 6 days despite not having a warrant. AHS executives broke their own hospital policy by failing to verify the legality of the patient's detention, then discharged the patient directly into ICE custody.

They also broke policy by anonymizing the patient in the hospital census, leading to delays in his ability to contact legal aid.

Hospital workers spoke up at the meeting, stating they have received no training from the hospital about dealing with ICE in the hospital, despite state law requiring this training. The only training some workers have had is a result of workers educating each other!

County Supervisor Nikki Fortunato Bas said she had previously been assured by hospital administrators that there was a warrant, and that this new information was "extremely upsetting." The county supervisors asked AHS to write a report of what went wrong. Alameda County has an "ICE-Free Zone" policy, which covers county property like Highland Hospital.

But we can do more than wait around for AHS executives to write their version of the story. Share your voice by signing a petition to demand AHS do better in protecting our neighbors from ICE! Hundreds have already added their names - sign and share with your coworkers and your community!

Petititon to keep workers and patients safe from ICE



Speak Out Now
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Midterms: A Widespread Rejection of Trump, But Now It's Up to Us

The Midterm Elections took place this week and the Democrats are now set to take control of Congress in January. The results represent a clear rejection of the Trump administration's policies by the population — a clear statement of opposition to ICE, cuts to social services, the war in Iran, the skyrocketing cost of living, and the chaos the Trump administration has unleashed.

Looking more deeply into some of the results, they showed just how massive the opposition to Trump and Republicans runs, even in more traditionally Republican areas. For example, Kansas, a long-time Republican stronghold, elected its first Democratic senator since 1932. This comes as no surprise as Kansas has seen one of the largest increases in the average price of gas in the country, with a 53% increase since the Iran War started.

In other places like Texas, majority-Latino counties that voted for Trump in 2024 swung sharply back toward Democrats. This was in part a clear rejection of ICE and its racist attacks on immigrant communities.

These results came despite the billions of dollars Republicans poured into these races, and despite Republican efforts to suppress the vote and spread false claims of voter fraud.

These results show a widespread opposition to the Trump administration and the social and economic situation we are facing. But we still need to be clear about what's coming, and what the Democrats will or won't do.

Trump's record Medicaid cuts will still take effect soon, leading to millions becoming uninsured, and could lead to public hospital closures and budget cuts across the country to the hospitals that treat the most Medicaid patients. ICE is already on our streets fueled by a massive budget and will not stop terrorizing immigrants. And they have billions of dollars to acquire and build more detention centers. Billions of dollars is still pouring into AI and data center construction across the country, sucking resources away from our communities, and threatening many jobs.

On top of this, the Iran war has no end in sight, with the U.S. threatening further strikes. And the Trump administration is working to pass a military budget of around $1.5 trillion dollars for next year. While some Democrats may express opposition to that figure, they still support large military budgets, and many are not opposed to the war on Iran or the continued genocide in Gaza. The Democrats have no solution to reduce the price of gas which has skyrocketed since the U.S. war on Iran. The truth is the Democratic Party will have some small ability to block or frustrate aspects of Trump's agenda through their control of Congress, but they don't have solutions to the multitude of social crises we face. And Trump has already said openly to the media that he intends to use the power of executive order and the presidential veto to get around the Democratic control of Congress.

What this means is that even though this election shows a widespread opposition to the Trump administration and its policies, it's not going to be the Democrats and Congress that will be the force to push back.

The only way to fight the escalating attacks waged against us is to organize our own forces. When ICE comes to terrorize our neighborhoods, it's not Congress that is going to do anything — it's us. The same goes for every other attack waged by this administration.

This couldn't have been made more clear than during the massive ICE operation carried out in Minnesota last January. It wasn't the Democratic mayor of Minneapolis or the Democratic Governor that stood up to ICE terror in the streets. It was the massive, organized resistance of working people across the region. In neighborhood after neighborhood, ICE couldn't make a move without being monitored, followed, and confronted in the streets, which culminated in a day of mass strike involving over one hundred thousand people. That's where our real strength lies: in the collective, mass action of working people.

The Democrats certainly don't support many of the Trump administration's policies, but they represent the same system that defends the interests of billionaires and corporate profits over the interests of working people. In the face of all of these problems, no one, including the Democrats, is coming to save us. It's up to us.

These election results confirm that there is a widespread opposition to this administration and its attacks. Their world is not the world that most people want to live in, one that sacrifices the lives of ordinary people for the profits of the billionaire class. But to actually stand up to these attacks and to fight for a world that truly represents the interests of most people, this election is not enough. This will take a much bigger fight, one that relies on the collective organized power of working people. That is the struggle we still have to wage.