



# Speak Out Now

[revolutionaryworkers.org](http://revolutionaryworkers.org)

[speakout@revolutionaryworkers.org](mailto:speakout@revolutionaryworkers.org)

(510) 343-9105

## Workers Must Stand Together!

Year after year Kaiser has continued to increase its membership and its profits. Last year Kaiser made \$3.8 billion in profits. It has \$29 billion in reserves. Its CEO Bernard Tyson makes \$10 million per year along with 25 other executives who make over \$1 million per year. Despite all of this, Kaiser wants to take away even more from workers.

This week 4000 mental health clinicians in the National Union of Health Care Workers (NUHW) have gone on strike across California against Kaiser's continued disregard for patients' needs. For years Kaiser has refused to hire enough mental health clinicians to meet the needs of patients. Mental health clinicians are understaffed and overbooked. Kaiser even tries to discourage patients from getting individual treatment, and instead pushes patients into group counseling sessions when they need one-on-one treatment.

At the same time, Kaiser has threatened to outsource the jobs of gardeners, call center workers, drivers and warehouse workers, parking attendants, and LVNs. These workers are part of the union SEIU-UHW. Kaiser has broken off contract negotiations with this union.

In recent contracts for nurses in CNA and stationary engineers in IUOE Local 39, Kaiser has increased our co-pays, and cut our medical coverage during retirement. It has tried to impose different wages for the same work in different regions, and it has not raised our wages to keep up with the rising cost of living. For all workers, Kaiser regularly keeps our departments understaffed, and rarely replaces positions when workers retire. We have continued to see our staffing levels reduced and the quantity of work go up without an adequate increase in our pay.

Management likes to manipulate our empathy as health care workers to get us to do more work. Management thinks they can continue to cut our staffing, dump more work on us, and we will just keep getting it all done because we care about our patients. But this only puts patients' lives at risk while Kaiser's profits are well taken care of.

Kaiser management wants to keep all the workers divided – whether it's between departments or within departments or between unions. This way they can try to pick us off one by

one. They don't want to see workers come together. They don't want workers to begin to see that we are all on the same side of the same fight, regardless of the union we may belong to, if we even have one. But it couldn't be any clearer who's on which side. It is Kaiser and their profits on one side, and all the workers and patients on the other.

The situation we face at Kaiser is similar to what workers face throughout the country. Recently Marriot workers went on strike across the country for over one month. Like Kaiser, Marriot has made record profits but doesn't pay workers enough to live on. The workers' slogan was "One Job Should Be Enough" – and that is exactly how it should be.

At the same time, Oakland Teachers and students face layoffs and school closures. Oakland Unified School District has been cutting programs from our students, is threatening to close schools, and is refusing to negotiate a fair contract. As housing costs continue to skyrocket in the Bay Area, Oakland teachers (like many workers in Oakland) can't afford to live in the Bay Area.

And nationally, General Motors just announced layoffs of 14,500 workers while it has continued to make billions of dollars in profits. Workers across the country are struggling to get by as corporations and their owners are making a killing. The average CEO makes 312 times the average worker. Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos' wealth recently skyrocketed to \$160 billion, making him the richest man in the world. In just nine seconds he makes what the average Amazon worker makes in one year.

As workers we have an enormous power because it is our work that makes this whole society run. And whether we are all aware of it now or not, if we can organize our forces to stand together, we can put a stop to their attacks. We have this power if we decide to use it.

Regardless of how this strike turns out, this fight against Kaiser doesn't have to the end but could be a beginning. It could be a chance for us to build new connections, build up our numbers, and start to develop the strength to fight together on the same side. It's time to recognize all the power we have when we stand together.

# **Speak Out Now at Kaiser**

December 10, 2018

## **Same Side, Same Fight**

There couldn't be a better time for all workers at Kaiser to stand together. Kaiser isn't just going after one group of workers – it is going after all of us. Many workers did not know even about this NUHW strike until the last minute. But imagine if workers prepared for something like this for weeks. Imagine if we had meetings in our departments with all workers, even from different unions. Imagine if we all organized and planned to go out together.

Would Kaiser still threaten outsourcing then? Would Kaiser still try to raise our co-pays then? Would Kaiser still refuse to hire more mental health workers then? When we are divided, we are always weak. But if we are united on the same side, we have the power to stop them.

## **Outsourcing? Who's Next?**

Kaiser continues to threaten to outsource the jobs of gardeners, call center workers, drivers and warehouse workers, parking attendants, and LVNs. The gardeners and the warehouse workers have been told this will happen within one year. These workers deserve our support. If Kaiser is able to get away with outsourcing any of our coworkers, who will be next? We should all stand together against Kaiser's attacks.

## **Not for Profit? Yes For Profit!**

Kaiser likes to pretend that it has some special mission that makes it different from other corporations. It doesn't. Kaiser's mission is the same as every other corporation or bank: to make profits. Kaiser doesn't see patients – it sees dollar signs. Kaiser doesn't see workers with real lives – it just sees labor costs.

Kaiser isn't competing with other hospitals over the quality of patient care. It is only competing over how much work it can get out of workers and how much money it can make.

## **COME TALK WITH US**

- If you think workers should start discussing problems at work and what to do about them.
- If you want to discuss how workers can begin to unite and organize on the same side.
- If there are problems in your work area that you think should be in the newsletter.

We are on Macarthur Blvd. near the entrance to the Hospital. Wednesdays from 6:45am to 8:15 and 3:30pm to 5:00pm.

## **Pass This On To A Friend!**

Phone: 510.343.9105

Email: [speakout@revolutionaryworkers.org](mailto:speakout@revolutionaryworkers.org)

## **This Can Be a Beginning**

This won't be the last time Kaiser attacks workers and patients. Maybe this strike of NUHW workers can be a new beginning for workers. Maybe this can be a wake-up call to all of us about which side we are on. Maybe this can be a way for us to begin to stand together against all of Kaiser's attempts to divide us. They try to divide us by job classifications, by part-time vs. full-time, one union vs. a different union, medical vs. non-medical, hospital vs. clinics, day shift vs. night shift.

All these divisions just work to Kaiser's advantage. If we want to stand up to Kaiser, we have to begin to stand together on the same side.

## **And Now They Offer Overtime?**

Management has made it very clear whose side they are on. They may try to be friendly with us and act like they are concerned about how we are doing. But this is all a show.

For weeks, as fires were raging, as flu season kicked in, as everything began to peak – management was unwilling to increase staffing if it meant paying overtime. But now during the strike they've been offering it to everyone without any limit. When they want to find the money to divide us, they know exactly where to look.

## **In a Timely Manner**

When does Kaiser ever do anything for the workers in a timely manner? When are our vacation requests handled in a timely manner? When are positions ever filled in a timely manner? When are our inaccurate pay stubs ever handled in a timely manner? Never.

But Kaiser management has the nerve to tell us to let them know whether we are going out on the picket line in a timely manner?

