The Burden Falls on Us
Throughout the pandemic, government officials have changed their minds several times and have sent confusing messages about pretty much everything. Whether or not we needed to wear masks, whether or not we needed to get tested, how long to stay in isolation, how the virus is spread.

So far, we are still missing the answers to a lot of these questions. But while these debates are going on, we have to remember that the burden of all of these decisions and conclusions falls on us, the healthcare workers who are serving the patients affected by this virus. If there aren’t enough masks produced to protect us, that falls on us. If there aren’t enough tests to check us regularly, that falls on us. If our patients are not properly isolated, that falls on us.

If we have to carry the burden of this pandemic, then we should be in the driver’s seat of decision making. We know best what is necessary to respond to this crisis.

Kaiser is Breaking the Wrong Record
Kaiser Walnut Creek was recently fined by Cal OSHA, making this the 12th Kaiser facility fined by the workplace safety agency.

Before this last fine, Kaiser already comprised 10% of the fines the agency has filed in the state, making their total sum owed to Cal-OSHA over $450,000.

The list of violations is long and includes: not training staff properly on the methods of transmission of the virus including airborne transmission, not providing proper protective equipment against airborne transmission, not informing people of possible exposures, and a lack of proper contact tracing.

It appears that Kaiser finds it easier to spend money on fines than protecting staff.

FakeM
This week, 40 hospitals all across Washington state discovered hundreds of thousands of counterfeit N95 masks in their supplies. Homeland security and the manufacturer 3M alerted the hospitals, which set off a race against time to get these dangerous counterfeit masks off hospital shelves and replace them with genuine N95 masks for workers to use.

Healthcare workers who wore these masks said they were such good fakes, they couldn’t tell the difference between them and the real ones they’ve been wearing for the past year. Workers at these hospitals are now getting tested for COVID because it's not known how much less effective these counterfeit masks are compared to genuine N95 masks. With transmission rates still soaring nationwide and possible surges after the Super Bowl this past weekend, as well as the new and emerging variants of COVID-19, the need for a safe and consistent supply of essential PPE like masks is a non-negotiable.

Nobody seems to know where these counterfeit masks came from or exactly how they made their way into the supply chain with the 3M logo on them. But what’s made clear to us again is the seriously lacking safety measures in hospitals, and the inherent greed of our production system that places importance of profits over the health and safety of human lives.

Why is Kaiser Anti-Science?
The CDC long ago admitted that coronavirus could be spread through airborne transmission. So why aren’t all COVID patients at Kaiser on airborne precaution? Is it because it’s more expensive to provide N95 masks to all workers that interact with COVID patients? Or is it that surgical masks, which don’t protect from airborne particles, are cheaper?

And speaking of masks, why is it that Kaiser has flyers posted denouncing double masking? What science are they using to back up the claim that double masking makes masks less effective? While double masking can make you fidget more, or give you a false sense of security, there is no well documented research that the practice is harmful by itself.

So who’s really behind these decisions - the doctors or the financial team?