

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



for OPEIU Local 8 members at Kaiser Permanente/Washington



COALITION OF
KAISER PERMANENTE
UNIONS

The National Coalition Announces Strike Authorization Votes Because of Kaiser's Bad Faith Bargaining

Kaiser's Values Are Not Our Values

With 31 days left before our National Coalition Agreement expires, Kaiser still hasn't made any proposal to raise wages for healthcare workers even after the pandemic and high inflation. For three days, management would not present any proposal to our National Bargaining Team. This is unheard of in the 25 years of our partnership. The only economic proposal they made was to slash the value of our PSP by capping it at \$1,400. They still do not want to guarantee a PSP payout for us, although managers would continue to get bonuses regardless of Kaiser's finances. We were clear with Kaiser that this was not something we were going to accept.

Kaiser's Bad Faith Bargaining.

Based on Kaiser's priorities, it's clear **we are very far apart**. While we continue to insist on wages that keep up with inflation and real solutions to the short staffing crisis, KP management has made no proposal to raise wages, tried to slash our PSP bonus, and is nowhere to be found when it comes to investing in workforce training, limiting outsourcing and so many other important priorities.

On Thursday, we held a [press conference](#) – that received national attention in the media – to announce that many Coalition unions are holding votes to authorize their National Coalition Bargaining Team to call for a strike because of Kaiser's unfair labor practices and bad faith bargaining.

OPEIU Local 8 union members cannot strike because our local union contract does not expire until March 31, 2025. Our contract contains the following provision:

ARTICLE 19

UNINTERRUPTED PATIENT CARE

This clause is included in recognition of the mutual responsibility of the Union and the Employer for continuity of patient care. During the term of this Agreement, the Union and its members will not cause, sanction, condone, take part in, or in any way directly or indirectly aid in any strike, sympathy strike, walkout, picketing, boycott, slowdown or stoppage of work, or any other similar conduct which interferes with the efficient operation of the Employer's business, or take part in any action whatever to prevent access of employees to the Employer's place of business. Both parties advocate at all times that any complaint, dispute or grievance be resolved through the procedures provided in Article 18 of this Agreement. In the event of any strike, sympathy strike, picketing, walkout, slowdown or work stoppage or threat thereof, the Union and its officers will make a good faith effort to immediately end or avert the same. The Employer shall not lockout its employees.

As long as our contract is in effect, we can't overtly support our fellow Coalition siblings with any actions that interrupts patient care.

The other Coalition union in the KPWA Region – 1199/NW, has contracts that don't expire until October 31 of this year.

Staffing: Band-Aids but no Permanent Solutions

Kaiser has not yet responded to our long-term proposals around subcontracting protections and eliminating vacancies. However, our Staffing Committee is working on an agreement for a temporary, one-year accelerated hiring period so we can ensure that 10,000 positions are filled by the end of 2023. It isn't final yet, but we are discussing:

- Mandatory quicker response times from both managers and employees during bidding
- Helping graduates of training programs get into hard-to-fill jobs
- Expanding experience barrier waivers
- Eliminating duplicative testing requirements
- Fixing communication problems with Taleo
- Paid externships
- High volume hiring events
- Hiring more Futuro Health graduates
- Referral bonuses
- Reduction of registry use
- Workers who are transferred or hired during this one-year agreement would commit to staying in their position for at least a year
- Increased funding for education

We are far from agreement, but on staffing, in the short term at least, we are having useful discussions and engagement. We have made it clear to Kaiser that while this quick short-term action is important, staffing shortages have existed for years and are predicted to continue for decades. We also need permanent staffing solutions in our National Coalition Agreement.

Only 2 More Bargaining Sessions Scheduled with Local Issues Included

We are meeting again with Kaiser on Wednesday, September 6 – Friday, September 8 and Thursday, September 21 – Saturday, September 22. Both sessions are taking place in San Francisco.

As part of the National Coalition bargaining process, local unions and management moved 3 outstanding local issues to the National bargaining table. Although our local contract has not expired, KPWA management has agreed to bargain local issues while national bargaining proceeds. OPEIU Local 8 has elevated the following proposals to be addressed:

1. Incorporate the Seattle minimum wage into the OPEIU Local 8 wage schedule annually when the base rate of a classification falls below it.
2. Increase all shift differentials and lead pay.
3. Add Juneteenth as a recognized and paid holiday.

Many thanks to our OPEIU Local 8 Bargaining Team for their hard work in representing you in both local and national negotiations: **Paul Bender**, *Labor Liaison*, **Misha Smith**, *Union Partnership Representative*, **Brenda Huffman**, *PAR – Urgent Care*, **Kenyatta McDowell**, *Lead PAR – PCAC*, **Bobbie Pringle**, *Patient Financial Specialist*, **Marissa Wilson**, *Lead PAR – Consulting Nurse Services*, **Leslie Liddle**, *Union Representative*, **Patrick Pedersen**, *Union Representative*, **Tara Powell**, *Union Representative* and **Suzanne Mode**, *Business Manager*.

Stay Tuned for Next Steps – It’s Our Contract Too Even if We Can’t Strike!

Your Bargaining Team:



Back row, Left to right: Marissa Wilson, Paul Bender, Brenda Huffman, Suzanne Mode, Lynda Bates

Front row, Left to right: Kenyatta McDowell, Bobbie Pringle, Misha Smith, Leslie Liddle

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