

# THE FACTS IN OUR NUHW NEGOTIATIONS

While we respect every individual's right to protest and express their views, we find it deeply concerning that the National Union of Healthcare Workers' leadership would place the health and well-being of employees at risk by endorsing and promoting a hunger strike as part of its bargaining strategy.

Despite the union's mischaracterizations, ongoing protests and strike activities, Kaiser Permanente continues to provide exceptional, timely access to care, which our members deserve. We've worked hard to ensure our mental health care is in compliance with state requirements. Our extensive network of more than 13,000 providers, along with 60% of NUHW-represented employees who did not strike or have since returned to work, ensures that patients in crisis receive care 24/7, urgent needs are addressed within 48 hours, and nonurgent patients are seen on average within six days—a standard that exceeds state requirements.

Kaiser Permanente is one of the largest unionized workforces in the United States, with more than 40 unions representing over 80% of our employees. We are among the most labor-friendly employers in the industry. We offer our employees industry-leading wages, generous benefits and opportunities for advanced training and professional development.

NUHW is demanding significantly higher pay to care for fewer patients. At Kaiser Permanente it is our responsibility to balance providing a generous contract for our employees with keeping high-quality care accessible and affordable for our members.

## NUHW has continued to focus on three primary issues:

**WAGES:** Kaiser Permanente's pay philosophy is to pay as much as 10% above local wages to attract and retain the best people. Our employees represented by NUHW in Southern California are currently paid significantly more than others in the market.

- Psychologists' pay averages more than \$160,000 per year. With benefits the average total is \$190,000.
- Clinical social workers' pay averages approximately \$125,000 per year. With benefits the average total is \$170,000.
- We have offered to increase wages an additional 19% over the next 4 years. NUHW is demanding wage increases that would put therapists' pay more than 30% above their peers in the Southern California market.

**NON-PATIENT CARE TIME:** We understand that therapists need designated time to prepare for appointments, for charting, and for professional development. Our offer provides up to 7 hours per week for non-patient care activities such as planning, preparation, coordination, and administrative work, with 5 of those hours protected. This is a generous arrangement not commonly available to those practicing outside of Kaiser Permanente. NUHW wants therapists to spend nearly 50% of each week not seeing patients, leading to thousands fewer appointments every month—at a time when mental health care demand is increasing and access to patient care is critical for our members.

**PENSION:** NUHW claims they don't have a pension, but that is not true. Kaiser Permanente provides our mental health therapists in Southern California with a generous defined contribution pension plan, to which we contribute up to 9%, nearly double the national average.

As medical professionals, we know firsthand the potential health risks and harm that can emerge from a hunger strike—including dehydration, malnutrition, organ damage, and in extreme cases, life-threatening complications. NUHW leadership's decision to endorse and promote this hunger strike is both unsafe and directly contradicts the principles of care and responsibility that define our profession. We are committed to protecting the health and safety of our employees and have arranged to have our clinical staff on standby during this activity in case of an emergency.

**The path to resolving our differences should be worked at the bargaining table. We have offered NUHW new bargaining dates.**