

# Everyone should be able to get mental health care when they need it.

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There is a mental health crisis in America. Everyone should be able to get mental health care when they need it – and we’re doing something about it. We have invested more than \$1 billion since 2020 to expand our mental health capabilities in California – with more therapists, more resources, and shorter wait times – and we know there is more work to do.

Our highly skilled, diverse, and compassionate therapists are essential to our efforts to transform mental health care. We respect and value the care they deliver, and how hard they work. That is why we are committed to reaching a new contract for our mental health and addiction professionals in Southern California. Unfortunately, the National Union of Health Care Workers (NUHW) is not acting in the best interest of our patients.

**A key issue in our negotiations with NUHW is the amount of time our therapists spend caring for patients.** Currently our therapists have about 25% of their work time available for record keeping, planning, administrative tasks, and meetings. NUHW is proposing that full-time therapists decrease time spent seeing patients and increase their time away from direct patient care by nearly 50% or at least 19 hours a week. This would reduce critically needed patient appointments by 15,000 every month. This is unacceptable for our patients.

**We value our licensed mental health professionals and pay them more than any other large health care provider in Southern California.** Across the board, Kaiser Permanente is a leader in pay and benefits. Our philosophy is to pay wages that are at or up to 10% above market. Today our Southern California therapists make on average 18% more than their peers earn in other organizations. We are offering across the board wage increases that total an additional 18% increase in pay for therapists over the next four years. NUHW is asking for a 30% wage increase over three years, increasing therapist pay to nearly 40% above market. This kind of pay hike is unreasonable and makes it harder to keep health care affordable for our patients.

**NUHW has said our therapists do not receive a retirement pension.** This is simply not true. Our therapists in Southern California participate in a generous defined contribution pension plan. Kaiser Permanente annually contributes an amount worth up to 9% of an employee’s salary as funds into this plan for employee retirement. In addition, we provide our therapists with generous retirement medical benefits which we are strengthening as a part of the proposal currently on the table.

**We’re committed to doing the right thing for our therapists and our patients.** We’re continuing to invest in additional capacity and solutions. We’re committed to providing the tools, resources, and time our therapists need to care for our patients.

We look forward to meaningful bargaining at the table with NUHW so we can reach a strong new contract that benefits our mental health workforce and our members – as we pursue our mission to deliver high-quality, affordable health care for our members and communities.

For more information, go to [kp.org/labor](https://kp.org/labor)