

# “It’s a no vote from me and many others!” Opposition continues to grow at Kaiser Permanente to sellout contract

Our reporters  
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*Join the fight for safe staffing and decent wages! Join the Kaiser Workers Rank-and-File Committee by emailing [Kaiserwrfc@gmail.com](mailto:Kaiserwrfc@gmail.com) or texting (213) 419-0737. Your name and contact information will not be shared publicly.*

Opposition continues to grow among health care workers at Kaiser Permanente to a sellout tentative agreement (TA) reached between management and the Alliance of Health Care Unions (ACHU). The TA was announced less than two days before over 32,000 Kaiser workers in Southern California were set to strike on November 15. Workers are set to vote on December 7 and 8.

Even though workers are set to vote on the TA in less than a week, the ACHU has not made the tentative agreement easily accessible to nurses. It was originally only posted on the United Food and Commercial Workers Georgia Local 1996 website and parsed out into 34 separate documents. Now it has been put into one document with additional information, but workers are still having difficulty accessing it and have voiced their complaints on United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP) social media posts.

“How about a link to all the local contracts so we can read them for ourselves. We do have reading comprehension and don’t need to be told what is in them,” said one worker. Another worker, Sheryl, said, “I am unable to access. I’m signed into the member link, but my access to read the tentative agreement is denied.” She added later, “So how are we supposed to read and either agree or disagree?”

Those workers who have managed to find and review the TA have found measly wage increases of 2 and 3

percent, effectively a pay cut with inflation at 6 percent and no guaranteed staffing levels. In return, the unions will receive a payout from management through the Labor Management Partnership (LMP), which Kaiser will fund to the tune of \$8 million a year, on top of an additional \$15 million to the Ben Hudnall Memorial Trust, which is a joint training program. Finally, it extends the usual three-year contract to four years, locking workers into the sellout contract for as long as they can.

A nurse named Annette addressed the UNAC/UHCP on social media: “I would like clarification on the STAFFING, BACKFILLS AND TRAVELLERS SUBCOMMITTEE. If anyone would like to follow along, it is in pages 49–52 in the agreement. As far as I can tell, the union’s response to the issue that has been plaguing KP departments ‘understaffing’: is to create a subcommittee... It seems to me that this is another way of passing the buck! How does this help with the already existing problem we are facing every single day even before the pandemic.”

In response to a reply from a union official, Annette said, “How different is this with the existing committee that we have in our old contract—“JOINT STAFFING AND SCHEDULING COMMITTEE”? This committee did not stop our ongoing understaffing issue. In fact, the staffing language in the old contract states the same... ‘a forum to address backfills and vacant positions.’ Since I have been in KP, I have yet to see this committee in action. When it comes to staffing, we have never been an ‘equal,’ management dictates what OUR unit-needs are based on their staffing matrix regardless of the acuity of the unit. What is the guarantee that after the committee has addressed these

hotspots and backfills and vacant positions that KP will address the issue appropriately? Your new staffing language does not say anything about that.”

Another worker added to the post, asking, “Yup, Kaiser is paying the union \$8 million plus a year, is this legal? Certainly not ethical. Might just be time to demand transparency and accountability with where all our dues money goes?”

“NO NO NO. Everyone vote no!” Arlen said. “After reading the Tentative Agreement it’s once again clear this is not a good contract for members. The proposed raises don’t even come close to inflation. And notice the language used... lump sum bonus. It’s not a ‘bonus,’ it’s a one time check of 2 percent which after taxes is too small to make a difference in many workers’ lives in comparison to the higher costs of living. Also, take note of the vague languages used throughout the contract. Basically meaningless since KP won’t be held accountable anyhow (i.e., chronic short staffing history etc.). I reached out to the union to ask if most members vote no on this what would happen. No response...”

Anita said, “the strike was called off prematurely in my opinion and I’m positively SURE if we had went on strike for one day, we would have received ANY & EVERYTHING WE asked for! Yes, the language in this agreement is a fancy way of saying and doing nothing! So it’s definitely A NO VOTE for ME and many others!”

Many of the workers who have voiced their opposition to the sellout contract have been censored by the union, which has deleted comments or even banned or blocked workers from interacting with UNAC/UHCP on social media. “I’d like to know why the UNAC/UHCP Facebook page is censoring certain comments left by members,” asked one worker. “Also why are they blocking people from posting or seeing their page? It’s NOT right for the union to do that. It’s shady and suspicious. Several people have made comments saying they’re being censored. Or something posted doesn’t show up later. And now I’m completely blocked from the page.”

“I work at a call center,” a Kaiser worker from California’s Central Valley told the WSWS. “Since the pandemic we have been able to work at home with a few still at the call center for one reason or another. Even with the few RNs and TSRs there, there have

been more than eight positive staff at the call center. We have been fighting with CNA to let us work from home. CNA is adamant about us returning to the call center. We find out in two-month increments if we are extended longer. Right now we are [working remotely] till December 31, 2021.

“Even once the remodeling is done, the building still needs to be torn down. When it rains you smell the mold. Management will put a shop-size fan to blow the smell out. The location is not safe. We have shared our concerns with the CNA and all we get is lies. We pay the union to work for us but they have their own agenda and it is not for RNs. We did do a one day sympathy strike for the engineers [on November 19]. Our contract is up August 31, 2022. And we got stuck in a five-year contract. Lots of takeaways, increased copays. The increase in wages was and is a joke.”

Another call-center worker from Northern California explained, “Our CNA doesn’t listen to or fight for the nurses. Instead it tosses money at politicians and their agendas. We, in our call centers, were looking for a way to force the union to represent our needs and interests first and foremost!”

In response to last month’s betrayal, nurses from the West Coast formed the Kaiser Workers Rank-and-File Committee (KWRFC) to organize opposition to the sellout contract and to fight to win health care workers’ demands, including the provision of adequate resources to finally bring the pandemic to an end. The KWRFC also released a statement earlier this month demanding an end to censorship by the unions on its social media pages.

To join the KWRFC, contact them today by emailing [Kaiserwrfc@gmail.com](mailto:Kaiserwrfc@gmail.com) or texting (213) 419-0737.



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