

# 31,000 Kaiser nurses prepare to walk out in California, Hawaii as conditions emerge for a general strike

Marc Wells, Tom Hall  
16 January 2026

*Fight for a general strike and a nationwide movement of the working class against dictatorship and inequality! Fill out the form to learn more about building a rank-and-file committee at your workplace.*

A strike of 31,000 nurses and healthcare professionals has been announced by the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP) at Kaiser Permanente on the West Coast. The January 26 strike is set to involve roughly 20 hospitals and 200 clinics in California and Hawaii.

The strike expresses the growing opposition among health care workers, and the working class more broadly, to intolerable conditions imposed by corporate health systems and enforced by an increasingly authoritarian political establishment.

This is the same group of workers who launched a five-day strike last October, with the last full day coinciding with the October 18 nationwide No Kings protests. Those demonstrations were some of the largest in US history, with an estimated 7 million marching against the fascistic Trump administration.

The upcoming strike centers on the same unresolved issues, including chronic understaffing, sub-inflation pay increases and growing economic and retirement insecurity. These are the exact same issues at stake in the ongoing strike by 15,000 nurses in New York City, a struggle which has drawn overwhelming support from workers across the area and the country. It also is set to begin three days after a general strike next Friday in Minneapolis against the ICE rampage in the city which led to the murder of Renée Nicole Good.

The Trump administration's attack on public health has deepened since October. The Centers for Disease Control is rolling back vaccine recommendations for

children and the measles are spreading a quarter century after the disease was eliminated in the US. The decision by Trump to cut off funding for supplemental Obamacare health subsidies has led to a staggering 1.4 million people losing their health insurance just over two weeks into the new year.

But the conditions are rapidly emerging in the United States for a mass movement in the working class against inequality and dictatorship. In the forefront are healthcare workers battling the consequences of for-profit healthcare and the subordination of patients' lives to profit.

To activate this potential requires workers take action. Emergency meetings should be held at hospitals and workplaces across the country, whether union or nonunion. Delegations of the most trusted workers should be elected to rank-and-file committees to prepare the groundwork for broad action, fanning out to other workplaces in the area to activate and coordinate with the entire working class. In particular, Kaiser healthcare workers must make contact with the New York City nurses to begin discussing a strategy for a national movement in defense of public health.

Initiative must remain in the hands of the rank and file. At Kaiser, union officials have kept rank-and-file nurses and health professionals working without a contract for months. "Safe staffing" clauses in nurses' contracts across the country are either toothless or remain dead letters, and hospital systems routinely flout even legal staffing mandates with impunity.

In particular, Kaiser nurses must organize to impose their democratic decision to strike and be prepared to override any attempt to cancel or limit the strike over their heads. The New York State Nurses Association

(NYSNA), for example, canceled strikes at 11 of 15 hospitals before they even had contracts finalized, much less voted on.

Kaiser nurses must appeal to their coworkers in United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770, who work as clinical laboratory scientists (CLS) and medical laboratory technicians (MLT). They have a two-day strike vote scheduled for January 22 and 23. To maximize their impact, workers from both unions should coordinate their timing and walk out together.

UNAC/UHCP is part of the Alliance of Health Care Unions, which covers 23 local unions covering dozens of hospitals and hundreds of clinics from Hawaii to Washington D.C. The entire membership must be engaged in joint actions organized through rank-and-file strike committees.

Kaiser exemplifies for-profit healthcare in America, thinly disguised by its “nonprofit” status. It generated \$12.9 billion in net income in 2024 and \$7.9 billion for the first three quarters of 2025. Despite this, Kaiser claims it cannot afford to invest adequately in staffing, retention and patient safety.

According to a UNAC/UHCP report, Kaiser also is investing in “companies like CoreCivic and the GEO Group, which run ICE detention centers and provide health care and living conditions so substandard they border on criminal.” ICE raids remain an ever-present danger at hospitals across California and the United States.

What is unfolding in New York, California, Hawaii and Minnesota is the spearhead of a broader capitalist offensive that threatens democratic rights, economic security and social cohesion. Trump functions as the political instrument of this process, while the Democratic Party, tied to Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, remains hostile to any genuine movement from below.

At the same time, Trump’s threats of war, from Venezuela to Iran and even Greenland, expose the priorities of the ruling class: limitless resources for militarism and repression, austerity for health care and all social needs.

The deliberate starving of health systems produces preventable illness and death, even as billions are funneled into corporate profits and financial speculation. In the same cities where Kaiser nurses struggle to care for patients, schools and public services

are being slashed and essential social programs dismantled.

The situation demands a new strategic approach. Nurses on both coasts and in Hawaii must unite with workers in Minnesota and beyond in a common struggle against fascism, war, repression, and exploitation. Central to this strategy is the formation of rank-and-file committees independent of union bureaucracies and big-business parties, capable of coordinating actions across industries and regions.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) has been established to provide the organizational framework and political leadership for this fight.

It seeks to link opposition to dictatorship and repression with the broader struggle of the working class against war, inflation, job cuts and social misery. The Kaiser strike must become part of this international counteroffensive, guided by the independent mobilization of workers themselves.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**