

Los Angeles Times

Kaiser to pay \$200 million
in fines after failing to provide
timely mental health care

October 13, 2023

CAPITAL & MAIN

Still Waiting for Kaiser's
Plan to Fix Its Mental
Health Care Shortfalls

September 6, 2023

Los Angeles Times

Union accuses Kaiser of
violations months after
state fine on mental health care

April 9, 2024

Why we're ready to strike to make Kaiser fix its mental healthcare system

Kaiser Permanente was forced to pay \$200 million last October for violating the rights of its patients to mental health care that met their needs. But one year later, Kaiser has no state-approved plan to fix its system and the core problems remain unsolved:

- We're still severely understaffed, which leaves patients unable to get timely, appropriate care within the Kaiser system.
- We don't get enough time for important patient care duties that can't be done during therapy sessions, like returning phone calls and devising individual treatment plans. This causes burnout and worsens understaffing.
- As mental health professionals, we're singled out for much lower salaries and poorer benefits than other Kaiser caregivers, which forces many of us to leave Kaiser, disrupting patient care.

We want Kaiser to offer mental health care that is as good as its medical care. And we're sick of Kaiser paying fines instead of fixing its mental healthcare system while patients suffer.

**Learn more about
our struggle:**



**Share your Kaiser
mental healthcare
story:**



**Help us make Kaiser end the inequities and
get serious about mental health care.**

kaiserdontdeny.org

NUHW NATIONAL UNION OF
HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Support Care Providers in Their Time of Need!

Please support your local Southern California Kaiser Permanente providers, including mental health therapists, psych RN's, psychologists, medical social workers, and home care social workers by donating to our strike hardship fund. We belong to the National Union of Healthcare Workers and we are striking because patients continue to endure dangerously long waits, inappropriate care for mental health, and substance use treatment services. Providers are being hurt through this process, having to violate the ethical values they swore by due to Kaiser wanting to operate mental health services as an assembly line.

Patient care is treated like a fast-food restaurant, not the quality-of-care we providers strive for. We have negotiated at the bargaining table, reached out to all levels of Kaiser leadership/management, filed grievances with the Department of Managed Health Care and other regulatory agencies, and worked to help pass mental health and substance use treatment parity legislation in California, yet our patients are still being denied medically necessary care.

"We are negotiating a new contract to win the same level of salaries, benefits, and patient care/administrative time that Kaiser provides its other professionals throughout the state, including our counterparts in Northern California."

Kaiser has the resources to fix its mental health system. Since 2018, the HMO has reported \$31 billion in profits. Yet, in a recent survey of Kaiser mental health therapists in Southern California conducted by their union, the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW):

FACTS:

- 65 percent reported that their departments lacked enough staff to provide timely and appropriate care to patients.
- 81 percent responded that they don't have enough time in the day for critical patient care duties that can't be done during therapy sessions.
- 68 percent reported that weekly individual therapy appointments at their clinic were not available to those who needed it.
- 58 percent reported that they can't see their patients every two weeks as required by state law.

Striking is a last resort, but the status quo is unacceptable for our patients; we can't allow them to keep suffering. Providers are having to find time to use the restroom, follow up, and do other duties they must do to maintain quality of care. **WE ARE TIRED!**

100% of your donations will help alleviate the financial burden for mental health professionals who are most impacted by foregoing pay, lowering barriers to strike participation, and making our strike as united and successful as possible! Please remember that your donation is not tax-deductible.

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