



## ***STRIKE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### **KAISER PERMANENTE STRIKE FAQs**

#### **WHAT IS A STRIKE EXACTLY?**

A strike is an option of last resort during bargaining. In a strike, union workers, together, refuse to go to work. This shifts the balance of power and would show the employer how essential we are.

#### **WHEN WOULD A STRIKE OCCUR?**

We could begin a strike any time after our national and local contracts expire on September 30.

#### **HOW MUCH NOTICE DO WE HAVE TO GIVE TO THE EMPLOYER?**

Ten days.

#### **IF WE WENT ON STRIKE, WHO WOULD TAKE CARE OF OUR PATIENTS?**

If we are forced to strike, the purpose would be to bring KP to the table for good faith negotiations to reasonably address issues such as future staffing and patient care. We would provide KP with the required 10-day advance notice before initiating any strike. The advance notice is unique to health care, and is required to allow employers preparation time to address patient care issues that would otherwise be of concern absent the 10-day notice. Lawfully exercising our right to strike does not constitute patient abandonment.

#### **HOW IS A STRIKE DETERMINED?**

Only a vote of the USW membership would determine whether or not we go on strike.

#### **HOW COULD MANAGEMENT FORCE US TO STRIKE NOW IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PANDEMIC?**

After years of fighting our demands for better staffing, Kaiser leadership has chosen this moment to push for unprecedented concessions while engaging in what we believe to be bad faith bargaining and other unlawful conduct. Management apparently believes they can take advantage of a public health crisis to ignore our demands for safe staffing, and to lower the standard of living for current union members and our future co-workers. There are backlogs in care, and potentially a new surge. Other hospital and clinic systems are responding to labor shortages and employee burnout by increasing pay and settling contracts. By blatantly ignoring the reality of an ongoing COVID crisis and a staffing shortage, Kaiser Permanente has displayed no consideration for the physical and mental health of the workers who have gone through so much, or for the patients we care for. It's time Kaiser Permanente took seriously what we as workers have faced and will continue to face in the pandemic.

#### **ARE THERE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS DURING A STRIKE?**

Yes, our union has a strike and defense fund that helps meet the essential needs of members during a strike, but is not intended to be an income replacement. Your local union will establish a strike assistance committee to help identify community resources and distribute donations and other monies from the strike and defense fund.

### **IF KP CUTS OFF HEALTH INSURANCE DURING A STRIKE, WHAT OPTIONS DO I HAVE?**

We hope that KP would not sever our members' health insurance if we decide to go on strike, but if they do, every member and our families can maintain uninterrupted care with the same benefits and costs by paying for COBRA. In addition, the USW has options for health care during a strike. More information to come.

### **WILL IT JUST BE USW MEMBERS ON STRIKE?**

We are part of 52,000 members of the Alliance of Health Care Unions that covers Kaiser workers in 8 states, many of which may also go on strike at the same time as us. If a strike should become necessary, the Alliance's goal is for every member in every eligible union to strike together. It will be a powerful show of force across the entire Kaiser system.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC TO SUPPORT US?**

Health care workers are the most popular professions in the country right now, and union actions by health care workers get huge amounts of support. They know that we saved lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they will support us. Other unions and community groups have already been sending letters of support to Kaiser leadership. Community members are also signing our petition in support.

### **WILL I GET FIRED OR DISCIPLINED FOR STRIKING?**

Absolutely not! It is illegal to discipline a worker in any way for participating in this strike or any other labor action. We are protected and stronger together.

### **HOW LONG COULD THIS STRIKE LAST?**

It's impossible to say. Ultimately, the length of a strike is a strategic decision.

### **WHAT KIND OF ISSUES COULD MAKE A STRIKE AN OPTION?**

Striking would be an option if what KP is offering is not acceptable to most of our members. For instance, we know that our top priority is safe staffing, and if they go after wages and benefits then they will only make this staffing crisis even worse. A 2-tier pay system (paying new employees on a lower wage scale than others doing the same work) or falling real wages could jeopardize patient safety and make us want to strike. A strike would also be an option if KP continues to engage in unfair labor practices, including bargaining in bad faith and violating our members' rights.

### **WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED OF ME DURING A STRIKE?**

A strike primarily means not crossing the picket line by not going to work! In addition, members should plan on walking the picket line daily, attending rallies, taking digital action, etc. Being on strike is not a vacation from work. It means working together to secure a contract that protects our patients and our livelihoods.