

Speak Out Now in Healthcare

A workplace newsletter for Highland and Kaiser workers

June 4th, 2025

Highland Management is Out Of Touch

The Highland cafeteria self checkout is now up and running, but it doesn't seem to be making the cafeteria run any more efficiently. There's still a cashier on staff - which is helpful for those paying cash or needing help - and most people are still choosing to check out with this person rather than a computer. Plus signs have been posted asking folks to check out with a cashier, rather than use the kiosk, to show support for these important workers.

It seems dumb that management spent money on these fancy new tablets (+ new printers for the hot food and grill), when checking out with a real person is still the preferred method of most people.

Victory for Mental Health Workers in Southern California

After months of striking, mental health workers in Kaiser Southern California ended their fight with some positive news. Their efforts, which lasted 196 days, survived through the cold of winter and terrible LA fires, and led to a 20% raise over 4 years alongside a \$2500 signing bonus. They also gained 5 hours of paid prep time - not too far from their initial demand of 7 hours of prep time - which many workers saw as crucial for attending to patients' needs. Additionally, the new contract has an improved pension plan, another major concern the strikers were fighting for.

But there were still areas which were left unaddressed. Even with the gains, Southern California mental health workers still do not have equivalent benefits to their Northern California counterparts. And Kaiser didn't give any guarantees in the contract that they would be addressing chronic understaffing - and we know too well that if it is only up to them, they won't.

The fact that strikers did not win all of their demands means that there is the possibility of more fights to come, but this contract is also a reminder for all Kaiser and healthcare workers that it is possible to organize and win improvements in our workplace. Solidarity is the key!

We Need Action, Not Wellness Tips

Every time you open your hospital's employee web portal, you can guarantee you'll be met with more "wellness tips" from your employer. Prevent burnout by drinking herbal tea! Try yoga for your back pain! Make sure you're practicing healthy sleep habits! Have you tried eating more leafy greens?

Yet the same hospital administration promoting these wellness tips is responsible for a large portion of the worker stress and burnout in the first place. Healthcare workers are exhausted because they're asked to do so much with so few resources, not because they need to drink more tea. We wouldn't have back pain in the first place if we had appropriate lift equipment, and enough staff to help us reposition patients. We'd eat more leafy greens if we had break nurses to cover us so we could actually eat the food we bring for lunch.

If management cared about our well-being, they wouldn't be pushing these insulting wellness tips. They'd be hiring more staff, getting us the equipment we need, and responding to our concerns so we wouldn't be so stressed and tired all the time. We deserve to be listened to and respected, not have our health trivialized with these ridiculous wellness tips.



Join us at Speak Out's next public event with journalist Todd Miller, who reports on the intersection of the climate crisis and the forced displacement of migrants around the world

Sunday, June 22nd, 4pm
Check IG: @sonsocialists or talk to the person who gave you this newsletter for more information



speakoutsocialists.org

IG: @sonsocialists

