

# Speak Out Now at Kaiser

A workplace newsletter for Kaiser Oakland workers

May 13, 2026

## LEGIONELLA AT KAISER SANTA CLARA

A significant Legionella outbreak has been reported at Kaiser Santa Clara Medical Center, where 18 patients and staff members have been infected.

Legionella bacteria grow in building water systems when those systems aren't properly maintained. Infection occurs when people inhale contaminated water in mist or vapor form. In a hospital setting, this can happen in several ways: a patient breathing in steam while showering, a nurse using a contaminated sink, or a facility engineer inhaling mist while servicing a cooling tower tied to the building's ventilation system.

For most healthy individuals, Legionella exposure causes only mild flu-like symptoms, if any. But in vulnerable populations, it can develop into Legionnaires' disease, a severe and often deadly form of pneumonia. Hospitalized patients are particularly at risk because their immune systems are often weakened by illness, surgery, or treatment. According to the CDC, 1 in 4 people who contract Legionnaires' disease in a healthcare setting will die from it.

The tragedy is that preventing these outbreaks is not a mystery. Facilities management workers in healthcare have well-established protocols for water management to keep Legionella in check.

Outbreaks like this one only happen when those protocols break down. The usual culprits are understaffing, deferred maintenance, and management treating preventative water system care as a cost to be trimmed rather than a patient and worker safety obligation. When hospitals cut corners on infrastructure, patients and workers pay the price—sometimes with their lives.

## SUMMER

### ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN!

Are you tired of looking at the news and seeing ICE kidnappings, inflation rising, wars and genocide being waged in your name and wealthy elites getting richer?

Wish you could do something about it?

Then join us for the first meeting of our summer organizing campaign meeting! We'll discuss concrete steps each of us can take to begin organizing for change.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH AT 3 PM**  
**JUDGE HENRY RAMSEY JR. CENTER**  
**2939 ELLIS ST, BERKELEY**  
**(NEAR ASHBY BART)**

## TECH FAILS

Have you ever been bothered by our time correction sheets? It's ironic how Kaiser spends so much on AI, but when it comes to our time card, it seems to be stuck with a system from time of the dinosaurs.

Quite a few weeks ago we were sold on the idea that we should edit our own time corrections - and we even had to do a training on it. But this "innovative" idea has really turned out to be just another way to dump more work on our shoulders.

Mainframe is a system that is as old as time. It is a nightmare to have to go from page to page, you can't navigate using a mouse, and it takes way more from our time than it should.

So now, on top of being overworked by having minimal staffing, we also have to squeeze in time to navigate this archaic system. Kaiser is great at showing how little it cares about its workers—thanks a million.

## TRANSPORT WORKERS LAID OFF

A few Wednesdays ago, our transport workers from Kaiser Oakland were laid off. Transport workers were trained to carry patients in a safe way between outpatient sections of the facility. And they were already stretched so thin that some have even developed hernias and other workplace injuries.

Kaiser has not yet said what is going to happen with the jobs that were lost. Will they hire contractors? Will they quietly dump this work on the shoulders of other workers without proper training?

Either way we know the administration too well to know one thing is certain - their decisions are to make profits, not to prioritize workers and patients needs.

