

# We Stand With Our Swedish Colleagues for Safe Staffing for Our Patients

8,000 caregivers at Swedish have given notice for an Unfair Labor Practice strike next week

**What: Unfair Labor Practice Strike at Swedish-Providence**  
Fighting for quality patient care, safe staffing and racial equity for all

**When:** January 28, 29, 30

**Where:** All seven Swedish campuses—First Hill, Cherry Hill, Ballard, Edmonds, Issaquah, Redmond, and Mill Creek

Our patients depend on safe, quality, competent care at every encounter with the healthcare system—and that includes, for our Seattle patients, hospital stays at Swedish-Providence First Hill and Cherry Hill.

Next week, 8,000 nurses and healthcare workers at Swedish-Providence who are fellow members of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW have authorized a three-day strike to demand quality patient care, safe staffing and racial equity for themselves and their patients. After nine months of bargaining for safe patient care, improvements to staffing, and recruitment-and-retention compensation, including a week of round-the-clock bargaining earlier this month, our Swedish colleagues are resolved to take the strongest possible action to stand up for patient safety.

Swedish management's proposals do not address clear commitments to safe staffing levels in every area, including nursing, Environmental Services, and social work; fair compensation for colleagues who work excessive standby in order to be available to patients at all hours; and wages and working conditions that will provide a path to fill Swedish's astounding 900 vacancies. Caregivers' goal at Swedish-Providence is not to strike, but to reach a fair contract settlement. But Swedish-Providence's unwillingness to address critical issues has left no other choice.

Providence, which owns Swedish, is a multi-state system with a corporate-wide strategy to prioritize profits over patient needs. Providence is a \$24 billion corporation that sits on an \$11 billion cash reserve. Swedish-Providence has committed unfair labor practices against its caregivers, and federal officials have found that Providence unlawfully terminated workers in retaliation for protected union activity. Instead of returning to the bargaining table, Swedish-Providence is threatening to lock out union members.

## We Stand with Swedish-Providence Caregivers

Across KPWA, we stand with our colleagues at Swedish-Providence who are standing up to this unacceptable prioritization of profits over our patients. Their patients are our patients. Our patients depend on Swedish-Providence caregivers as they birth their babies, recover from their surgeries, and receive compassionate care for their illnesses. Swedish-Providence caregivers are standing up for a safer, more just future for our patients and for all patients and caregivers across our community.

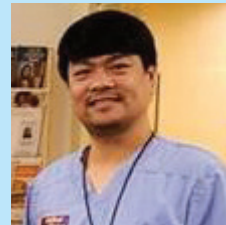
So now is the time for us to show up and support them in this urgent fight.

## What We Can Do to Show Support:

Join the strike! Nurses and caregivers will be on an unfair labor practice strike Jan. 28-30 at all Swedish hospitals—First Hill, Cherry Hill, Ballard, Issaquah, and Edmonds—and the Swedish ambulatory care centers in Redmond and Mill Creek. Grab a picket sign and walk the line. Talk to your delegate or organizer Jake Horowitz at 425-919-3809 for further logistics of how you can join up on a picket line.

- **Do not accept shifts from any agencies who may be recruiting caregivers to replace striking Swedish colleagues.** It is essential that we say no and stand with our Swedish colleagues in their strike for patient safety.
- **Give to the Solidarity Fund!** Striking can cause hardship for healthcare workers and their families. Your generous donation to the Swedish Solidarity Fund ensures caregivers have a safety net during this fight. Visit [www.SwedishSolidarityFund.org](http://www.SwedishSolidarityFund.org) to donate.
- **Sign the petition!** Visit [www.UnitedforSafetyatSwedish.org](http://www.UnitedforSafetyatSwedish.org) and sign our petition to Swedish-Providence management demanding they prioritize patients over profits.

Our strength is our unity. We will remain united more than 30,000 members strong across SEIU Healthcare 1199NW until our Swedish-Providence colleagues get the contract agreement that our patients deserve.



"I support our Swedish union brothers and sisters 100 percent and will be joining them on the picket line after work. I encourage all of my KPWA colleagues to do the same. We should also NOT

be picking up shifts at any Swedish location during the strike. This is about safe staffing and quality patient care, and no one does that better than our fellow union members at Swedish. Providence needs to do what's right and come to the table and settle a fair contract."

**Frederick Marcelo, LPN, Northgate**

What will happen to Kaiser patients during the strike?

Kaiser management has communicated to us that as much as possible, Kaiser will facilitate patients getting care at sites other than Swedish during the strike. Pregnant moms will deliver at Overlake and other patients needing hospital care will as much as possible be diverted to Overlake as well. We urge Kaiser to continue supporting our patients in accessing safe care elsewhere than Swedish during the strike. We also call on Kaiser management to advocate to Swedish management to reach a contract agreement that supports recruitment and retention and quality, safe care for every patient.

A message from our Swedish colleagues: Why we will be on strike for our patients next week:



“We spent nine months of giving Providence evidence of how broken our system is. These are not just our stories. Everyone who works, has them. Everyone. I was shocked to have to ask my co-workers for a strike vote and amazed with a resounding yes. We need a safe workplace, more of a voice in our staffing, workload limits for EVS workers, a fair wage for our counselors and a respectful call/standby system.”  
**Cindy Hale, RN, Periop Multi-Campus Float Pool**



“Our EVS co-workers are some of the most important frontline healthcare providers that we have. They’re the gatekeepers to the hospital. If we don’t have EVS to clean appropriately, we can’t move patients out of the ER and into the hospital. If they’re forced to cut corners, then our infections increase. We’ve seen management refuse to make any meaningful commitments to addressing EVS workloads or nursing staffing. We’ve seen them make empty promises to address our concerns without giving us a true plan. Recently the DOH went to First Hill and noted that the facility was dusty and dirty. Without addressing this in bargaining, it will stay this way. So we’ve given our strike notice that things are unacceptable and that we will not leave anyone behind, including or service workers and social workers and, most importantly, our patients”  
**Whitney Powers, RN, Emergency Department, Edmonds**



“Given the strong economy, historic low unemployment and skyrocketing costs of living, maintaining the status quo on PTO and subcontracting are not wins. We need to push for improvements. Management's current wage proposal is less than what we won five years ago. Providence has a huge cash reserve, they can afford to offer a competitive package that will recruit and retain healthcare workers, while committing to provide a safe environment for both patients and staff. This is why we need to be united and strike together.”  
**Stephanie Johnson, Sonographer, Cherry Hill**



“It’s very important that we can have workload limits so that we are not getting injured. If we don’t have workload limits it’s going to be the same old. My message is – we have to stand up together and fight for what we need. We have to be together so that the next generation of workers doesn’t have to struggle like us.”  
**Amie Ajmeh, EVS Tech, Environmental Services, Issaquah**

National Agreement Next Steps: Contract Specialists will support us in implementing our contracts, strengthening our union, and building a culture of partnership at KP

The National Agreement between Kaiser and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions gives us access to new structures that strengthen our union and build partnership across KPWA. One of these is the contract specialist position. Contract specialists are Kaiser colleagues who go on leave from their usual position at Kaiser for one year to accept a role representing our union in contract implementation, delegate education, union-building, and partnership work. Contract specialists remain employed by Kaiser and return to their regular Kaiser healthcare role at the end of the contract specialist term.

There are currently two full-time contract specialist positions open, with an expected start date around March 1. We are currently in discussion with management about creating a third, part-time contract specialist position to fully meet the ratio of one contract specialist per 1,200 union members that we bargained in the new National Agreement.

Get more information about the contract specialist role and how to apply at the link above.

**SEIU Healthcare 1199NW/KPWA Contract Specialist job posting:** <http://bit.ly/2RDDT3e>  
**Contract Specialist application deadline:**  
**February 1, 2020**