

Despite Huge National Profits in Pandemic Months, Kaiser Pushes Cuts to Standards

We must continue to stand together in unity — that's how we win

Coalition wage increases are locked in through 2022, but Kaiser is trying to short other workers despite bringing in \$11.4 billion in pandemic profits. Why?

As part of the 2019 National Agreement, **Coalition union-represented employees will receive a wage increase totaling 3%, effective the first pay period after October 1, 2021.** Here in WA, we will all get 2% across-the-board wage increase plus an additional 1% lump sum payment.

Kaiser has brought in \$11.4 billion in pandemic profits. So, why are they trying to shortchange frontline workers and care providers in the Alliance? In the face of a national shortage of healthcare workers, cutting pay and benefits will only make staffing problems at Kaiser worse for all of us.

KAISER PROPOSES LOWER WAGES AND BENEFITS FOR NEW HIRES (TWO-TIER) TO ALLIANCE UNIONS

The agreement between Kaiser and the Alliance of Healthcare Unions, other frontline workers like us, will expire in two weeks.

Kaiser is pushing an array of cuts for those workers, most importantly lower wage rates for new hires—a first step to reducing pay for all of us.

Kaiser is also trying to eliminate Defined Contribution retirement benefits for new hires, opening the door to eliminate it completely later down the road.

SOUND FAMILIAR? COALITION WORKERS NARROWLY AVERTED A STRIKE IN 2019 TO FIGHT BACK THESE SAME CUTS, AND WE MUST DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO STOP THEM AGAIN NOW.

ARE FRONTLINE WORKERS OVERPAID?

Kaiser is telling Alliance workers that they are on average 26% overpaid—a message we heard in 2019 and that we expect to hear again in 2021.

"We are on the frontlines of this pandemic, making our lives, exhausting our bodies, and depleting our mental health fighting this pandemic. It's demoralizing to hear that Kaiser thinks any of us are overpaid."

DEANNA ARBRY, OPEIU LOCAL 29, UNIT ASSISTANT, RICHMOND MEDICAL CENTER, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Greedy is eroding care at Kaiser.

Kaiser is not struggling financially. They've already made \$5 billion in profit in the first half of 2021, on top of \$6.4 billion in 2020. That's \$11.4 in pandemic-era profits. When is enough, enough?

For Kaiser patients, Two-Tier wages and benefits are a recipe for disaster. Healthcare workers are leaving the industry in droves setting off staffing crises everywhere. This is not the time to devalue the work of frontline heroes.

Kaiser needs to respect and honor its frontline caregivers and staff with a contract that invests in patient care and those who provide it—not push cuts on to exhausted heroes who have been saving lives and risking their own throughout this pandemic.

AS PART OF THE COALITION OF KAISER PERMANENTE UNIONS, WE STAND WITH ALLIANCE WORKERS AT KAISER IN REFUSING TO ACCEPT LOWER WAGES OR BENEFIT REDUCTIONS.

WE MAY BE IN DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS, BUT WE CAN SEE KAISER'S GAME OF "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" AT WORK.

SURELY, KAISER HAS STILL LOST ITS WAY. AND IT'S UP TO US TO BRING THEM BACK TO OUR CORE MISSION: PATIENTS, NOT PROFITS.

<https://1199nw.org/2WJf8Jw>

COALITION OF UNIONS @unionsalliance @seiu1199nw



<https://1199nw.org/2WJf8Jw>

“Locking in good wages and benefits in 2019 wasn’t easy — we took action and nearly went on strike to bring Kaiser back to its senses. Three years later, Kaiser is at it again, pushing Alliance Unions to agree to a two-tier plan that would reduce wages by 26% on average and eliminate some retirement benefits for new hires, and to accept 1% wage increases. Is this really what it means to be in Partnership?” -**Deb Deveno, Optometrist, Union City, CA IFPTE 20, Northern California**



It is easy to see what is coming. If Kaiser gets away with pushing two-tier wage onto some workers, they will be emboldened to try to push it even harder onto everyone else, making it harder than ever to recruit and retain the staff we need to provide high-quality care. Coalition union members need to be ready to hold them accountable and demand that Kaiser: **Respect and honor its frontline caregivers and staff with a contract that invests in patient care and those who provide it!**

To start, [sign this petition against two-tier](#), (or scan this QR code) then share it with your co-workers.



CRS Bargaining

As Kaiser nationally pushes an unfair and inequitable two-tiered wage scale for new hires, locally they are pushing for a wage scale for Community Resource Specialist (CRSs) in Spokane that amounts to about \$4 per hour less than Western Washington, and not paying daily overtime to CRSs. We fought and won wage parity years ago so that we are paid equally for equal work no matter where we live. If Kaiser can pay CRSs in Spokane less money for the same work, what's to stop them from paying other job classes less in Spokane, or Everett, or Olympia, or Kitsap? This is not a path we want to go down. We have made movement in our compensation proposals in an effort to get to a fair agreement, but we are holding the line on telling Kaiser we will not agree to two-tiered wages scales in any of our contracts.

“As an Executive Board member, I represent the over 3,000 members of our union. I attended CRS bargaining to send a message to management: We do not agree with a two-tier wage proposal for CRS, or for any of our members. It is offensive that Kaiser thinks they can pay CRS in Eastern Washington less.



I was there when KP proposed lower pay rate for Eastern Washington Medical Assistants. We as a union did not agree then. We stood up together because it is wrong to pay less for equal work. We will stand up again now. CRS are vital part of our work here. Many patients are feeling embarrassed about their financial situation. I call CRS, by the time they leave the patient feels wonderful — somebody listened and made them feel wanted and respected by Kaiser. Just like we are standing up as members of the Coalition to support our Alliance counterparts against Kaiser’s unfair wage proposals nationally, we will stand united as SEIU members in support of the CRS team against Kaiser’s unfair wage proposal locally, and we will win!” -**Marie Neumayer, Medical Assistant, Union Partnership Representative, SEIU Executive Board Member, Spokane**

We have reached agreement with Kaiser on our 2021 PSP Goals, but continue to dispute the existence of a Financial Gate

The expertise we have in our jobs improves the care we provide and strengthens Kaiser. Our Coalition National Agreement gives us an opportunity through the Performance Sharing Program (PSP) to utilize our expertise to focus on areas of improvement at Kaiser and earn an additional bonus in March each year by meeting bargained goals designed to improve our jobs and the care our patients receive. We then work in partnership with management to meet our bargained goals.

Last year, because of the pandemic, we guaranteed this bonus no matter our performance on our goals — this was the Hero Bonus we received in March 2021.

This year our PSP bargaining team identified with management four “metrics” (goal areas), in addition to our attendance goals, for us to work on through the end of 2021 to get our PSP bonus for this year. Each metric makes up a percentage of the overall bonus we receive if we meet that goal (referred to as the “weight”).

Our 2021 Coalition PSP Goals

		50%	100%	150%
Affordability	Weighting	Threshold	Target	Stretch
Qualified savings from Affordability Projects	18.75%	\$315k	\$740k	\$1mill
Quality	Weighting	Threshold	Target	Stretch
Blood Pressure under control for hypertension patients	18.75%	64.80%	67.90%	74.30%
Service	Weighting	Threshold	Target	Stretch
Press Ganey “Likelihood to recommend” face-to-face only	18.75%	83.80%	85.10%	87.10%
Workplace Safety	Weighting	Threshold	Target	Stretch
Assigned KP Lean Workplace Violence Prevention Training Completed	18.75%	80%	90%	95%
Attendance	Weighting		Target	
Action Plan submitted	10%	complete		
2% improvement in Attendance	15%	2%		

Note: if we reach our Target goal in an area, when the overall bonus is calculated, we get 100% of the weight of the bonus for that area. If we reach the Stretch goal, we get 150% of the weight of the bonus for that area.

Because of our work together, we already completed and submitted our Attendance Action Plan earlier this year, which is 10% of our bonus.

Unfortunately, management wants to put our bonus in jeopardy by insisting that Kaiser must meet a specific financial margin (or “financial gate”) to receive our bonus. That could mean our bonus that relies on the work we do to improve Kaiser could be lost if Kaiser makes financial decisions that we don’t control that negatively impact the region’s overall finances.

We believe this violates our National Agreement language and we’ve not agreed to linking our PSP to the region’s financial performance. Because of this, we are utilizing our process in the National Agreement to dispute this claim by management and ensure we are able to receive our bonuses based on our bargained metrics in Service, Quality, Affordability, Attendance, and Workplace Safety.

“We, along with other Coalition members, are currently advancing the national dispute about having a dubious financial gate stand between us and the bonus we collectively work for and earn. However, it is important that we come together now and work to meet the current metrics to ensure our eligibility for this year’s PSP bonus. We all have a role to play in ensuring we are paid the PSP bonus, while improving our workplace.” **Tim Ma, PT, Union Partnership Representative, Bellevue**



Arbitration Victory Results in PSP Payout for Probationary Employees

As members of the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, every year we bargain the Performance Sharing Plan (PSP) with Kaiser management.

Our bargaining team negotiates specific metrics which, if we meet, earns us an annual bonus. The National Agreement clearly states that “all Kaiser Permanente employees covered under this Agreement shall participate in the Labor Management Partnership PSP. This includes full-time, part-time, short-hour, causal, on-call and per diem employees.”

Unfortunately, Kaiser management decided not to include our probationary employees who had worked 90 days or less by the end of the year.

We initiated the dispute process outlined in the National Agreement and took our case before an arbitrator. After labor and management presented their cases, the arbitrator ruled in our favor.

As a result, our probationary employees will now receive all PSP payouts, including retroactively receiving last year’s PSP Payout (Hero Bonus). If we were hired after Oct. 1, 2020, we likely did not receive our PSP payout. As a result of this victory, we will receive a retroactive payout on our October 1, 2021, paycheck based on our PSP-eligible hours worked in 2020 (pay periods 1–26). The payment will appear in the Earnings Summary section of our payslips, with “PSRetrPerf-IncentShr” in the description field.

“I began my journey with Kaiser in the middle of October of 2020, knowing that I might be putting myself at risk during these crazy times of Covid-19. I believe in what Kaiser has to offer and the movement to KEEP THRIVING. When I found out that our Union was looking out for us, taking care of us for putting our time our energy our health and livelihood at risk every day we showed up for work, I was proud to call myself a union member, a fellow THRIVER. Little did I know the Kaiser didn’t believe in me as I believed in them and their philosophy. A cutoff date was given and we who started in October did not matter. My fellow union brothers and sisters, no matter when we were hired, showed up and did what we could to help our fellow neighbor by coming to work. This virus could have taken any of us at any time, it didn’t care whether I started in October or the previous year if we were the unlucky, and if we didn’t have a good health system to help us survive, we would have perished like some of our loved ones have. I mattered on October 19th when I first started at Kaiser as well as every other healthcare worker that that started that day or any other day in 2020. Thank you SEIU and OPEIU FOR RECOGNIZING MY WORTH.”

-Aaron Mercado, MMT, Materials Management



Financial Incentives for Supporting Our Colleagues

As healthcare workers, we are the frontline of defense against this pandemic. We are committed to providing the best possible care to our patients. Unfortunately, we are experiencing staffing shortages like never before. This doesn’t just impact our patients but causes burnout and strain on our colleagues. We have met with Kaiser management and have agreed on a plan to support our colleagues by offering financial incentives to those of us who pick up shifts in other clinics or extra shifts in Urgent Cares or CHIPs. Any of us in any unit and job class who picks up a voluntary or mandatory shift assignment outside of our home location will receive the float premium and commute pay – something we pushed for and won. For those of us who are able to take a patient load in UC or CHIPs we will get time and a half plus a lump sum incentive. The table below outlines the lump sums:

	8-hour shift	10-hour shift	12-hour shift
RN	\$140	\$175	\$210
LPN	\$120	\$150	\$180
MA / ER Tech / HUC	\$120	\$150	\$180

“This situation is a perfect example of why we as staff need to have a seat at the table in decisions that affect us. The redeployment incentive agreement isn’t perfect, but it’s better than where management started because we used our voice to advocate for something better. We got the float pay for everyone included. This is why we all need to be active in our union — it’s the way we make sure we have a voice.”

-Cenetra Pickens, RN, General Surgery, Tacoma Specialty Center



New pay changes and higher standards taking effect now!

In our 2019 bargain, we won additional pay increase for specific job classes who were behind. Some of those increases kicked in on October 1st, in addition to increased weekend premiums, stronger subcontracting protections and staffing language in the National Agreement.



Starting Oct. 1, 2021:

- Weekend premium increased to \$2.50/hour for Service bargaining unit, SWEA bargaining unit and exempt ARNPs.
- No subcontracting of any work at patient care facilities, including Environmental Services.
- Specific ban on outsourcing home health.
- Staffing levels, including the staffing level needed to take into account adequate replacement of absent coworkers, determined in unit-based teams—which we are actively working to launch.

Additional higher raises for jobs that are behind, effective 10/1/21:		
Job	Additional increase 10/1/21	Total increase 10/1/21
LPN	1%	3% raise, with a 1% bonus
Social workers, MLTs, and Mental Health Care Coordinators	1%	
Custodians	1%	
Spiritual counselors and bereavement coordinators	7.5%	9.5% raise, with a 1% bonus

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