

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)

Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Office location:
4275 NE Halsey St., Portland, Oregon

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 13150, Portland, OR 97213

Phone: (503) 288-3311

Web address:
<https://nwlaborpress.org>

Editor & Manager: Michael Gutwig
Senior staff reporter: Don McIntosh
Office manager: Jill Lukens

Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions are \$15 a year for union members, \$23 a year for all others. Pay by credit card online at nwlaborpress.org/subscribe, or send a check to our mailing address (above) along with your name, address and union affiliation, if any. **Group rates of 48 cents an issue per member** — \$11.52 a year are available for 25 or more subscriptions; call 503-288-3311 for details.

CORRECTIONS: See an error? Please let us know at editor@nwlaborpress.org or by phone at 503-288-3311.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you move, let us know at nwlaborpress.org/subscribe-services or by mail at our mailing address (above). Be sure to provide your old and new addresses and the name/number of your local union. Please allow three weeks for the change to take effect.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS
P.O. BOX 13150 PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Showdown looms as Kaiser sticks to pay-slashing proposals

By Don McIntosh

What's the matter with Kaiser Permanente? In 2000, the non-profit health maintenance organization allied with unions in a historic labor-management partnership that's been held up as a model for win-win labor relations. Since then, industry-leading wages and shared decision-making helped establish Kaiser as a desirable place to work. But increasingly, the partnership appears to be unraveling, and for the second time in the last two years, Kaiser could be nearing the brink of a strike.

From Sept. 8 to 10, up to 50 union representatives in the Alliance for Health Care Unions (AHCUC) met with Kaiser's management bargaining team to negotiate a new three-year contract, both online and in person in Los Angeles. One of two multi-union coalitions at Kaiser, AHCUC combines 21 locals in eight states, representing 52,000 Kaiser workers. At Kaiser in Oregon, its affiliate is Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP) Local 5017. OFNHP, which is part of the healthcare division of American Federation of Teachers

(AFT), represents 4,000 nurses, techs, physician assistants and other professionals at Kaiser.

In Los Angeles, Kaiser's bargaining team stuck to much the same proposals that provoked alarm when they were first presented on Aug. 25: Annual raises of just 1% and a "two-tier" wage scale that would slash wages for new hires. To accept 1% raises at a time of 5% inflation would mean that members immediately lose purchasing power.

"It seems like the company has reversed its policies by 180 degrees, but we're not clear when and how that happened," said Maureen Anderson, AHCUC chief of staff. "'Best jobs, best care' has been the watchword of the labor-management partnership since it was started in the '90s."

Anderson said Kaiser's two-tier proposal is very poorly thought given a severe ongoing staff shortage. And its proposed starting pay for newly hired housekeeping attendants and mobility techs in the Inland Empire region of Southern California would be less than the legal minimum wage in California.

"It's like they didn't do the math on their own proposal,"

Anderson said.

Kaiser's proposed 1% raises are also less than the 3% annual raises it agreed to in its contract with the other union coalition: CKPU (Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions.)

With 11 local unions and 80,000 members, CKPU is the original coalition, which AHCUC split from in 2018. CKPU's contract runs through Sept. 30, 2023. Kaiser pushed to slash new hire pay and benefits when negotiating that contract too, but backed off as a strike loomed.

To justify the proposed concessions, Anderson said Kaiser cites concerns about competition, and pitched a scary story about Amazon's entry into the health marketplace (Amazon has a pilot health insurance plan centered on "virtual care.") But Kaiser operates on a different model than its ostensible competitors: As an HMO it's both an insurance company and a network of hospitals and clinics. And though it's organized as a non-profit, it's highly profitable.

In the Sept. 8-10 negotiations, Anderson said Kaiser's top negotiators also walked back racial justice agreements made by their own representatives in a subcom-

mittee, including Juneteenth as a paid holiday, help for workers obtaining citizenship, and staff training to identify unconscious bias and improve the workplace and patient care experience.

For its part, AHCUC is proposing 4% annual raises.

Within AHCUC, five unions totaling 38,000 members have contracts expiring Sept. 30 or Oct. 1. Those include OFNHP, United Nurses Association of California/Union of Health Care Professionals in Southern California, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1996 in Georgia, UNITE HERE in Hawaii, and Steelworkers Local 7600 in the Inland Empire. If members authorize a strike once those contracts expire, they could walk out after a legally required 10 day notice.

No further bargaining was scheduled as of press time.

SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

- Send a letter to Kaiser by clicking <https://bit.ly/2Xb6GTo>
- Join the "Rally to Save Lives," 6 pm Sept. 28 at Kaiser offices, 500 NE Multnomah St., Portland
Details: <https://bit.ly/3EbsFus>

Your Oregon & Washington
Union Mail House.

MORELINK
PRINT & MARKETING PARTNERS

Proud Mailers of the
Northwest Labor Press

morelink.com • 503-736-0111 ext. 140

PLEASE SHOW OUR
ADVERTISERS YOU
APPRECIATE THEIR
SUPPORT FOR THIS
LABOR MOVEMENT
NEWSPAPER!



WHITE & WESCO
"Always the best Quality"
10" SMOKE JUMPER
16" LINEMAN
HUGE SELECTION
WATERPROOF BOOTS
SIZES IN NARROW,
MEDIUM & WIDE
AI'S SHOES
5811 S.E. 82ND • 771-2130

Hours: Mon-Sat 12-6 pm Closed Sunday

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family

**Why support another financial institution when
you can support your UNION credit union?**



Contact us for your next loan. We offer a wide variety of loan products with competitive rates and terms designed to satisfy your borrowing needs.

We have chosen to support the union trades and we encourage you to do the same.

**Call or visit us today! 800-356-6507 or at
ibewuwfcu.com**

**IBEW AND
FEDERAL
CREDIT
UNION**



Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family