



UFCW Local 7 continues to advocate for our members to improve staffing, and to make sure that our members have sustainable workloads and that ultimately Kaiser Permanente patients – all of us – get the care we work so hard to achieve. We have filed a suit in federal court to secure the promises that KP has made to Local 7 members in our contracts:

- Sufficient staffing to meet quality standards of patient care, workload, and other issues affecting patient care, including, but not limited to, assuring adequate coverage, sick replacement, overtime, and to assure that no employee is required to work in any situation in which his or her license is threatened or places any employee or patient in danger.
- To that end, Kaiser shall provide sufficient staffing to address quality of standards of patient care and provider workload including safe coverage.

We do not take the prospect of filing a lawsuit lightly. It is indeed a different measure than what we have done in the recent past.

The fact of the matter is that Local 7 has advocated for sustainable careers for our members over the last forty years. We advocate for all of this not just for employees to have a decent work experience, but patients also deserve better. Among other things, the suit alleges short staffing contributed to delays in care and ultimately bad outcomes. Specific examples of this are outlined in the complaint itself.

Prior to filing suit, we took up our staffing related concerns to the highest levels of leadership in this region, and they have often dismissed the serious concerns voiced by our members – all of you. This pathway is unsustainable.

While KP has an interesting interpretation of why Local 7 is taking up this suit, the reality is that we are doing this to make KP better. KP does a lot of work to sell insurance; yet it must also fulfill its commitment to the patients they sell insurance to. While litigation is often a close-to-last resort, it is a tool that can help us achieve what KP prides itself in promising to its customers and its employees.

The feedback we have received from our Local 7 members has been highly supportive of our approach.

We are not alone. Other entities have recently filed suit to achieve better results for KP:

- US Dept of Justice intervened to address medicare fraud.
 - <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/government-intervenes-false-claims-act-lawsuits-against-kaiser-permanente-affiliates>;
 - <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/federal-government-joins-overbilling-lawsuits-against-kaiser-permanente-2021-07-30/>
- Employees of KP filed suit, and KP settled the suit for racial discrimination.
 - <https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/kaiser-permanente-paying-115-million-settle-racial-discrimination-class-action-lawsuit>

Thank you to all of our Local 7 members for the advocacy, dedication and smarts you bring to your work every day. Thank you for standing together to make KP a better place to work.

In unity,
Nate Bernstein
Director – UFCW Local 7