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EMPLOYEES FROM OVER 20 LOCAL UNIONS SOUND ALARM ON KAISER PERMANENTE STAFFING CRISIS AS UFCW LOCAL 7 CONTINUES FORWARD ON STAFFING LAWSUIT

More than 90% of members surveyed report that their departments were understaffed; 95% say the Kaiser Permanente staffing crisis negatively impacts patient care and access

DENVER – Today, the [Alliance of Health Care Unions](#), which represents over 52,000 Kaiser Permanente employees, including the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 of Colorado and Wyoming, published the results of their [survey of healthcare workers](#) to understand the magnitude of the staffing crisis at Kaiser Permanente. Currently, Local 7 has litigation against Kaiser Permanente for the Company's failures to address understaffing in their facilities throughout Colorado which has endangered UFCW Local 7 bargaining members' professional licenses, among other negative impacts to both workers and patients.

The findings of the survey show that short staffing is universal across Kaiser Permanente, with more than 90% of members surveyed reporting that their departments were understaffed. In addition, the Kaiser Permanente staffing crisis negatively impacts patient care and access, as reported by 95% of the members surveyed. Only 51% of healthcare members surveyed would recommend Kaiser Permanente as a good place to receive care.

“Unfortunately, Kaiser Permanente has continued to fail to engage frontline staff and their union in staffing decisions as is required by their collective bargaining agreements which is why UFCW Local 7 is continuing to press Kaiser Permanente in federal court to address the chronic staffing issues,” said **Kim Cordova, President of UFCW Local 7 and UFCW International Vice President**.

Employee burnout is a significant factor in the healthcare staffing shortage due to increased stress and strain on mental health and exhaustion. Working in a staffing crisis environment has created poor working conditions driving many healthcare workers to leave the healthcare field or consider leaving Kaiser Permanente. 89% of members surveyed said the staffing crisis has negatively affected their mental health or that of their coworkers.

“As a Registered Nurse providing care to our patients, and also in my role representing union healthcare professionals, I see chronic short staffing everywhere,” said **Becky Sassaman, registered nurse at the Kaiser Permanente facility in Lone Tree, Colorado, and UFCW Local 7 union steward**. “Staff are anxious, exhausted, and hopeless, and as the company continues to increase demands on staff, the fear of making a mistake is rising and the overall mental and physical health of our teams is worsening. People are not well; we are not thriving,” said Sassaman.

The current working conditions are creating even more staffing issues. More than half of the members surveyed have considered leaving the Kaiser Permanente workforce for another employer because of short staffing. 21% have considered leaving the healthcare field; and 19% have considered retiring earlier than planned.

UFCW Local 7’s healthcare members have proposed remedies for retaining current staff such as offering a higher percentage of existing staff part-time positions so they can balance work with family care needs; addressing the shortage of primary care physicians by leveraging highly skilled nurse practitioners and physician assistants to assure access to high quality, affordable care; stabilizing the urgent care workforce which currently is experiencing high turnover by increasing the number of providers so that patients are seen in a timely manner; increasing pay premiums to retain staff in certain hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain areas; posting job openings in the many areas of the company’s healthcare facilities that are understaffed; and hiring additional behavioral health providers to meet the increasing mental health needs of our Colorado community.

The [survey](#) was conducted from March to July 2023, with 8,607 responses from Kaiser Permanente workers in various roles including, registered nurses, lab technicians, environmental services technicians, healthcare professionals, call center staff, engineers, security officers, and many more, across California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Mid-Atlantic States, Colorado, and Georgia.

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[Local 7](#), the largest Union in Colorado and Wyoming, is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union which represents over 1.3 million workers in the United States and Canada, and is one of the largest private-sector Unions in North America. UFCW members work in a wide range of industries, including retail food, food processing, agriculture, retail sales, and health care.

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The [Alliance of Health Care Unions](#) includes locals of AFSCME (UNAC/UHCP), AFT (OFNHP), HNHP, IBT (Local 166), ILWU (Local 28), IUOE (Local 1 and 501), KPNAA, UFCW (Local 7, 27, 135, 324, 400, 770, 1167, 1428, 1442, 1996, and 3000), UNITE HERE! (Local 5), and USW (Local 7600) representing over 52,000 Kaiser Permanente employees.