

# United States Senate

December 21, 2022

Greg A. Adams  
Kaiser Permanente  
One Kaiser Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Adams,

We write today in support of mental and behavioral health workers in the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) in Hawaii who have been on strike for 16 weeks, and working toward a contract for nearly five years since the bargaining unit was formed. We encourage Kaiser Permanente to come to a good faith agreement for the sake of both the critical workers on strike and the patients across Hawaii who need to utilize mental and behavioral health services.

For years, Hawaii—and our nation—have struggled with a worsening mental health crisis that is exacerbated by lack of investment in mental health services. Mental and behavioral health workers—including psychologists, therapists, and social workers—provide critical services across our health system, and those services have become even more important over the last several years, as our state and the nation have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest. The 57 behavioral health clinicians on strike are a critical part of the workforce and serve a Kaiser patient population of 260,000 people across Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island.

In November 2021, Kaiser was able to come to an agreement with 32,000 workers of various unions to avert a strike. More recently, in October 2022, Kaiser came to an agreement with mental and behavioral health workers of NUHW in California, ending a 10-week strike. Your company has shown a willingness to broker good faith agreements with workers in other states. We ask that you make that same effort with workers on strike in Hawaii—even if they represent a smaller population of clinicians. Kaiser’s mental and behavioral health workers in Hawaii deserve the same level of investment and parity as their mainland counterparts.

More than ever, health systems with the kind of market penetration Kaiser has in Hawaii should be working to ensure patients receive the timely, medically-necessary mental health services essential for protecting the wellbeing of our communities. This level of care requires retaining the current skilled workforce and recruiting new talent into the state—not engaging in years-long contract disputes. These workers deserve a fair wage, and patients deserve dependable, quality care.

While your company has, for nearly five years, refused to negotiate in good faith a reasonable salary and workload demands for 57 employees, Kaiser Permanente reported a record \$8.1 billion in net income in 2021. We ask that you take time this holiday season to consider the workers on which your company and patients depend and finalize a contract.

Sincerely,



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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

*Ron Wyden*

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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

*Elizabeth Warren*

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

*Dick Durbin*

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

*Kirsten Gillibrand*

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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

*Chris Coons*

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Chris Coons  
United States Senator