

Kaiser Permanente reaches tentative deal with 75,000 health care workers

October 16 2023, by Robin Foster



A tentative deal has been reached between Kaiser Permanente and its

75,000 health care workers following a three-day strike.

"The frontline [health care workers](#) of the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions are excited to have reached a tentative agreement with Kaiser Permanente," union officials [posted](#) Friday on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"We are excited to have reached a tentative agreement with the frontline health care workers of the @UnionCoalition this morning. We are thankful for the instrumental involvement of Acting U.S. Labor Secretary [Julie Su]," Kaiser Permanente said in an X [post](#).

Health care workers who serve millions of Americans began the three-day strike after [contract negotiations](#) over staffing levels stalled.

The union represents medical assistants, surgical and lab technicians and pharmacists, among other staffers. Along with staffing levels, pay and benefits are an issue, CNBC reported.

Paula Coleman, a 10-year clinical lab assistant who oversees blood and urine testing for Kaiser in Englewood, Colo., said low staffing levels in her lab jeopardize [patient care](#). Coleman, often the only person working in her lab in the early mornings, fears she would not have backup if an emergency struck while she was drawing a patient's blood.

"We feel the absence of our coworkers every day," Coleman told the Washington Post. "This could be someone's mother, sister, brother or daughter. This is about [patient safety](#)."

The strike targeted Kaiser hospitals and medical offices in California, Colorado, Oregon, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Washington state. Employees in Kaiser's Georgia facilities weren't affected. Kaiser Permanente serves nearly 13 million patients and operates 39 hospitals

and more than 600 medical offices across the United States.

Caroline Lucas, executive director of the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, said staffing shortages have made working conditions unsafe and have led to deteriorating care for patients.

"We continue to have front-line health care workers who are burnt out and stretched to the max and leaving the industry," Lucas told CNBC. "We have folks getting injured on the job because they're trying to do too much and see too many people and work too quickly. It's not a sustainable situation."

Kaiser generated \$25 billion in revenue in the [second quarter](#) of 2023. It reported \$2 billion in profit for the quarter, up from a loss of \$1.2 billion during same quarter in 2022, CNBC reported.

More information: The University of Southern California has more on [staffing shortages](#) in health care.

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