



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

September 21, 2022

Mr. Greg A. Adams
Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc.
711 Kapiolani Boulevard
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dr. John Yang
President and Medical Director
Hawaii Permanente Medical Group, Inc.
3288 Moanalua Road
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819

Dr. Ramin Davidoff
Executive Medical Director
Southern California Permanente Medical Group
1011 Baldwin Park Boulevard
Baldwin Park, California 91706

Aloha Mr. Adams, Dr. Yang and Dr. Davidoff:

On behalf of the psychologist, social workers, nurses and chemical dependency counselors of Kaiser Permanente, I am writing to advocate on behalf of Kaiser's 266,000 insured members in the State of Hawai'i, and those who are struggling to access mental health services they are entitled to.

I ask each of you as representatives of the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group and the Southern California Permanente Medical Group to return to the negotiating table and address the understaffing crisis of your mental health care services. The ongoing strike by Kaiser's therapy and mental health clinicians has brought to light the severity of Kaiser's staffing crisis but it also points to Kaiser's unwillingness to fairly negotiate a resolution when Kaiser's response is to propose a wage freeze and cut retirement benefits, including the elimination of pensions for new hires.

It is my understanding that since 2018 Kaiser has repeatedly put negotiations with mental health unionized employees on hold, yet Kaiser has been able to negotiate raises and no reduction in benefits for non-mental health unionized employees. It is imperative that Kaiser break through the current stalemate for its members and for those potential skilled therapists in the greater island community who could be available for hire if not for Kaiser's poor working conditions and unsatisfactory compensation scale.

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Local media reports have highlighted Kaiser being placed under a "corrective action" plan by the National Committee for Quality Assurances due to violations of the national behavioral health standards. And while Kaiser will be given an opportunity to correct its violations, it stands to reason that Kaiser would be motivated to correct these violations by considering tried-and-true tools such as hiring bonuses, improve working conditions, and boost wages and benefits to correct this unfortunate downgrade.

In conclusion, it is critically important that both private and public sectors urgently work together to connect individuals experiencing mental illness, substance use disorders and homeless into treatment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Fevella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kurt" and last name "Fevella" clearly distinguishable.

Senator Kurt Fevella

State of Hawai'i, District 19

Minority Leader/ Minority Floor Leader

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